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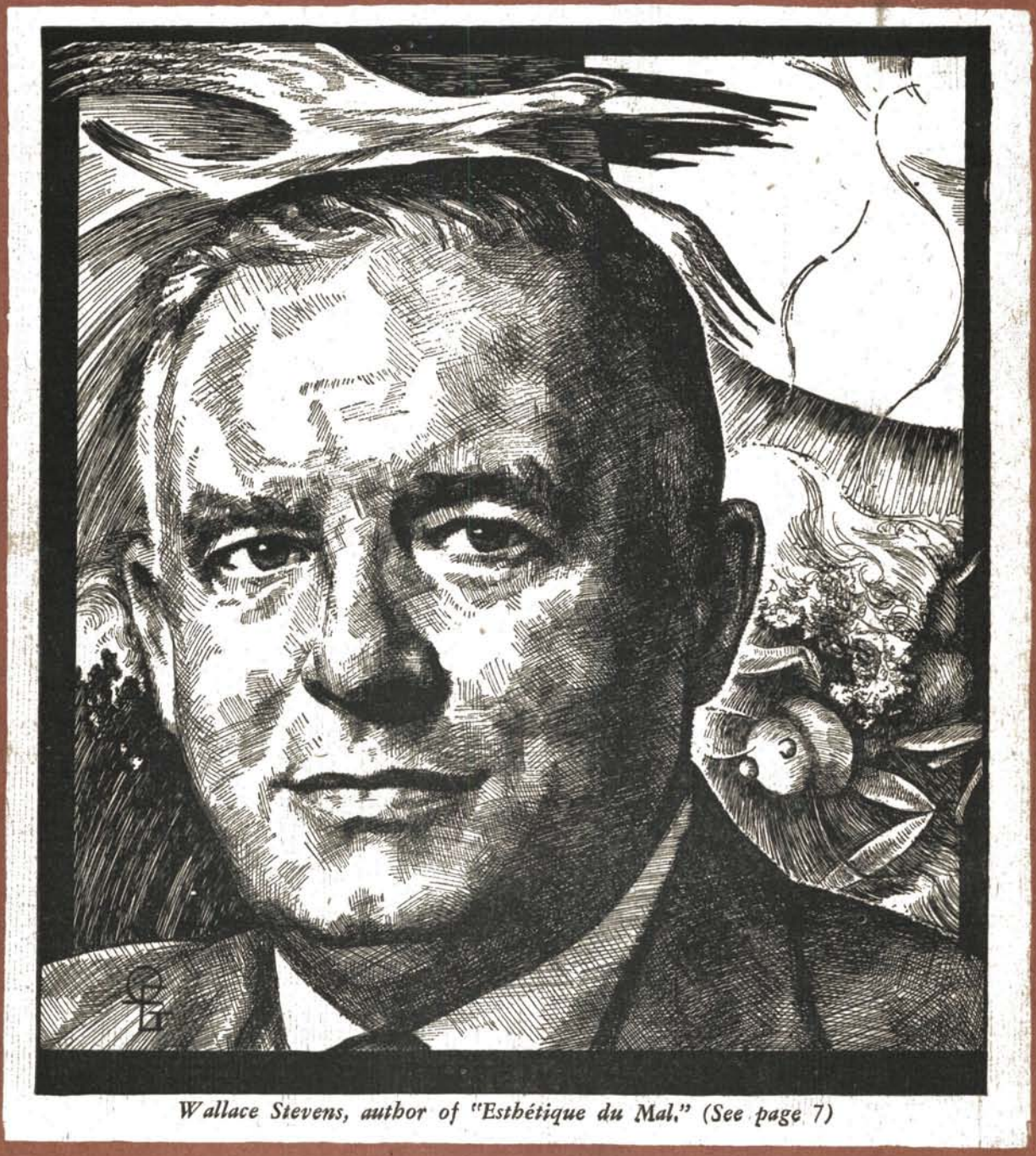

Wallace Stevens, author of "Esthétique du Mal." *(See page 7)*

Meaning in Modern Poetry

By LLOYD FRANKENBERG

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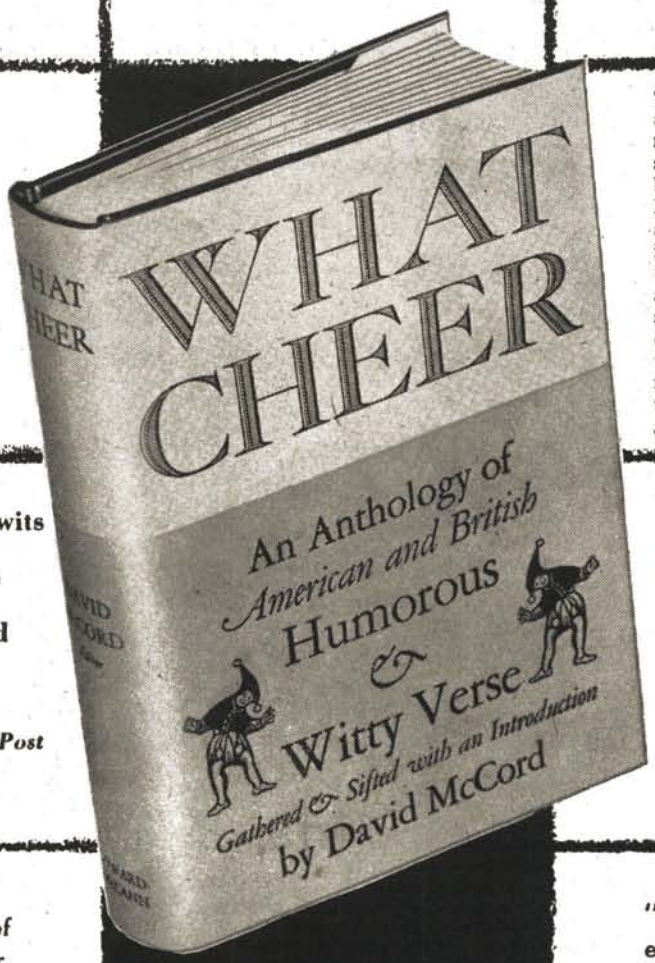
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Annual Poetry Issue

WILLIAM ROSE BENET, *Editor*

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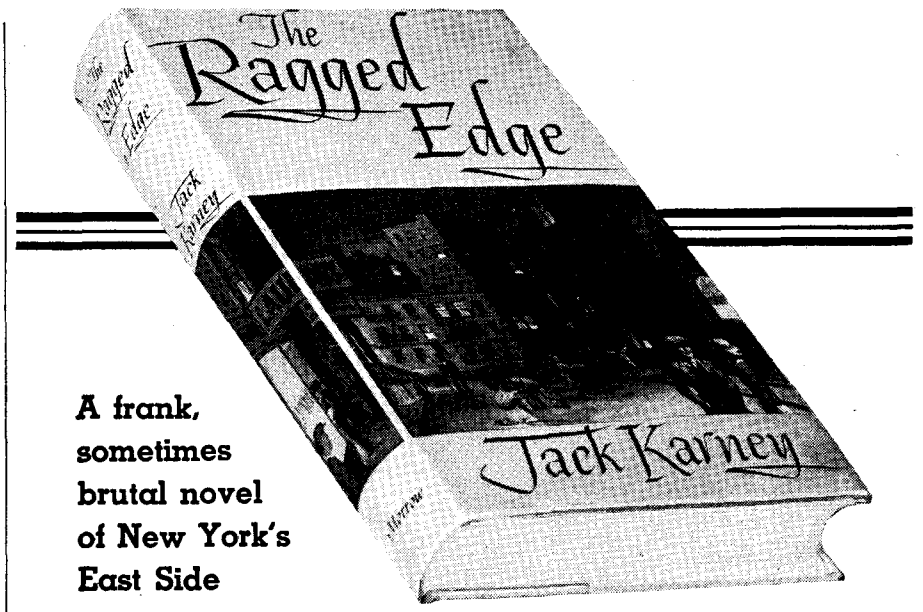

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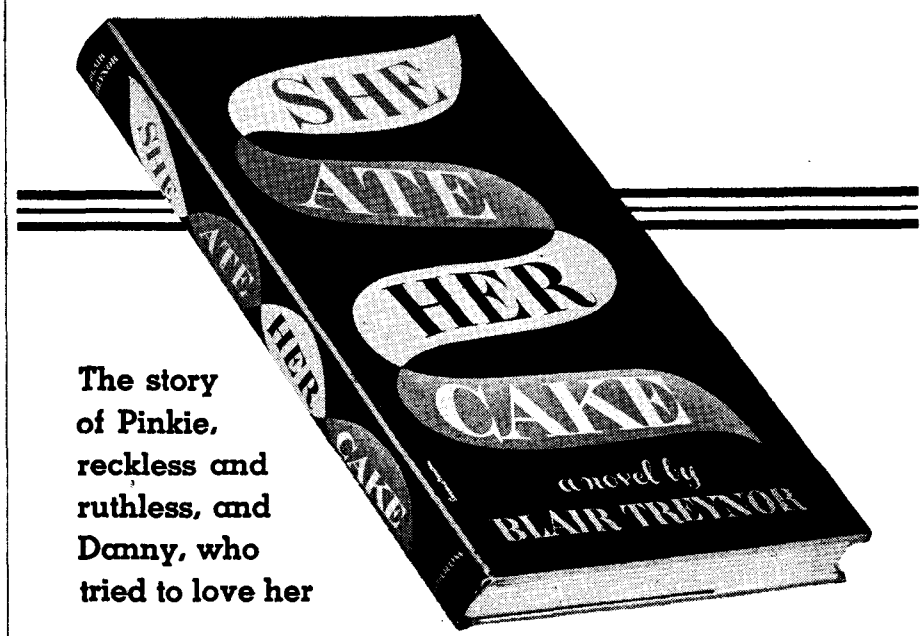

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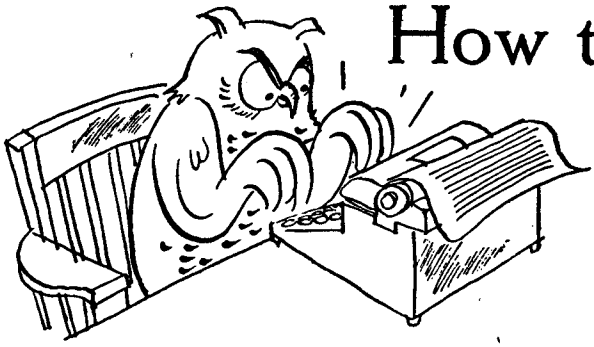

How to write a bestseller

PEOPLE are always asking us how you go about writing a bestseller. When we tell them we don't really know, they grin and nod wisely, as though they didn't expect us to reveal this great secret anyway.

We have often thought of doing what one of our publishing neighbors did when he set up shop. He stocked his office bookshelves with a complete library of the bestsellers of the past fifty years. We don't know whether his subsequent success in publishing was due to the hidden knowledge gained from a patient study of these bestsellers—or, in spite of it. We suspect that reading bestsellers to discover what makes them sell is like opening up the hen that laid the golden eggs.

We remember the sad fate that overtook a book that was deliberately created, devised and manufactured to be a bestseller some years back. It was the result of a bet made in a Club on 45th Street which is something of a meeting place of the literary great and near great. A novelist who shall be nameless, and whose books sold fairly well but were never spectacular successes, made the rash statement that any fool who could write could produce a bestseller, if he *wanted* to. There was nothing to it, he said. He just didn't happen to want to write that kind of stuff. To make a bestseller (our rash friend still talking) all you had to do was to read a couple of the current bestsellers, find out what was in them, and simply repeat the formula with new characters and a new background. Others challenged this pat analysis of the bestseller situation, bets were placed, and our friend went home to win his bet.

In due time he produced a novel that had all the ingredients of a bestseller in the proper, scientific proportions: adventure, sex, bold men, soft and lovely women, strange places, suspense, violence, and little bits of wisdom filched from the ancients. The result? *A colossal flop!* Reviewers were either bewildered, infuriated, or certain that he had written a travesty. And the public yawned it into first place on the remainder list.

WE HAVE sat in on many publishers' sales conferences and listened, in amazement sometimes, to the sales talks on books that no one liked—not the publisher nor even the editor who was lashing himself into a tizzy over it. If we have learned nothing else in all our years in the business, we have learned this one rule: *Publish nothing except what you or your trusted associates really like.* Not the stuff about which some idiot enthusiast says: "This isn't much good. It bored me, in fact. But lots of people like this kind of thing and it'll probably sell like all getout!" The great publishers, men like Henry Holt, Alfred Knopf, Alfred Harcourt, Ben Huebsch, Maxwell Perkins, published only what pleased their own superb taste. Fortunately for them, and for the public, what *they* liked also delighted countless others—and so, many bestsellers were born.

IT'S NICE to have people think that you're smarter than you are—that you know all about bestsellers—but after you've lived with the idea for awhile, you begin to wonder. Perhaps they're right. Maybe you have, by some accident, hit on the key to the mystery. In this humble attitude of scientific inquiry, we checked the case histories of six recent Holt bestsellers—and have come up with some facts. We think we know now how you write a bestseller. It's not really difficult.

First, you have to be a man or a woman. If you're a man, you can be an artist, a newspaper man, a business man, or a teacher. If you're a woman, you would do well to become an expert on horse breeding. Does this sound silly? Well, it's true. Take the case of the woman. *Marguerite Bayliss* grew up on a stud farm in New Jersey. For years she edited the *Horse Show Blue Book*. Out of the 4,000 show horses in the country she can recognize 3,600 of them. Her bestseller, THE BOLINVARS (63,780 copies so far) was written for the fun of it. It was first published as a limited edition in two volumes at $15. but even that didn't stop it.

Alfred Hooper was the Headmaster of an English Preparatory School when the war broke out. He joined the R.A.F. and began to teach air corps candidates. He recognized at once the need for a refresher text in mathematics and began to write one. It was published first in Great Britain. Revised for American use, it was published here as A MATHEMATICS REFRESHER. American sales so far: 83,454.

Le Grand Cannon spent ten years in business before he decided to become a writer. Now he spends as much time as he can admiring the New Hampshire countryside and getting acquainted with the people about whom he writes. He writes very slowly. His bestseller LOOK TO THE MOUNTAIN has sold 261,510 copies over all to date. An earlier book of his, A MIGHTY FORTRESS, will be republished soon.

Bill Mauldin, whose cartoon figures, *Joe* and *Willie*, made the brass hats squirm, was born 24 years ago in New Mexico. He started his career by scraping together $300 and going off to Chicago to study at the Academy of Fine Arts. His first break came when the editor of the 45th Division News (Mauldin himself was by that time a private in a truck company) asked him to join the staff as a cartoonist. When we decided to publish his cartoons in book form, we asked him to write a text around the cartoons and how they were produced. The result was UP FRONT, a book with 30,000 words of text which has already sold 989,200 copies.

The case of *Ernie Pyle* is the strangest of all. Before the war, he was an unknown roving reporter who lived in an agony of shyness and embarrassment. He had grown up on an Indiana farm. It wasn't until Ernie went to England during the London blitz in 1940 that his great gift for reporting the real war was recognized by the public. Millions began to read his column. He became the Boswell of the doughfoot. When he died on that tragic "last trip" to Leyte, he was probably the most beloved American reporter who ever lived. The sales of each of his books, BRAVE MEN and HERE IS YOUR WAR, are in the millions.

ALL OF WHICH brings us to the conclusion that the publishing of books is a strange and wonderful business. It is as personal as your own hand, as exciting as a sweepstakes, as mysterious as sex. Samuel Butler, no slouch as a bestseller himself, summed it up well in his *Notebooks:* "There are some things which it is madness not to try to know but which it is almost as much madness to try to know. Sometimes publishers, hoping to buy the Holy Ghost with a price, fee a man to read for them and advise them. This is but as the vain tossing of insomnia. God will not have any human being know what will sell, nor when any one is going to die, nor anything about the ultimate, or even the deeper, springs of growth and action, nor yet such a little thing as whether it is going to rain tomorrow."

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Meaning in Modern Poetry

LLOYD FRANKENBERG

THE charge is frequently made that modern poetry is obscure. Writing in these pages a year ago, Robert Hillyer quoted with approval Max Eastman's comment to the effect that poets nowadays are engaged in "talking to themselves." To substantiate this, he called the following "a flight from clarity": dream-imagery, Eliot's "learned reference," Joyce's "puns and onomatopoeia," the "oblique approach of the stream-of-consciousness" and all "hair-splitting" awareness "of the subtleties of language, of the single word."

Such complaints serve to summarize a prevailing attitude in conservative criticism. It is not a new attitude. It greets every art from time to time, especially when that art is in process of breaking new ground. Keats and Browning, for example, were in their day objects of similar attack.

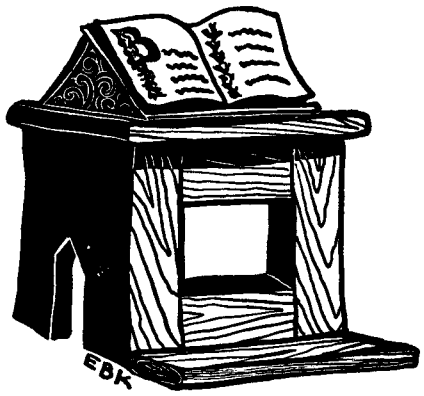
One reason why this attitude persists is that it cannot be categorically refuted. Obviously not all experiment succeeds, nor every experimenter. The very nature of invention makes it vulnerable. Instances of obscurity can be collected not only from the works of present-day poets but from those of Keats, certainly of Browning, and perhaps of every poet who ever departed from the conventions of his time.

Originality in writing does begin as a more or less private language. It gains recognition, as a rule, slowly, since its import is different from that, let us say, of newspapers or billboards. We have come to expect innovation in the sciences and in industry. But toward anything new in the arts our natural resistance is still great. Certainly it is in no need of stiffening. Critics who imply that any attention paid to new forms is a waste of effort, since all are obscure, do a disservice, it seems to me, to the reader quite as much as to the writer.

One of the obstacles to the understanding of poetry, especially modern poetry, is a general misconception of "meaning" and "clarity." It is true that some meanings can be clearer than others. If I say, "I gave him an apple," the statement is clear, but it isn't clear about a great deal.

Prose is apt to go in the direction of this limited type of clarity. It tends to build up its complexities of meaning by addition, in a more or less continuous line. Fact succeeds fact. "I gave him an apple. He ate it."

Poetry tends more to build up its meanings, you might say, by multi-



plication. It is less concerned with facts as facts. If the eating of an apple occurs in a poem it is not likely to be passed on as a bit of informative gossip. It is more likely to be related to some emotion, let us say, connected with the eating of apples. Fact is subordinated to imagination.

We have still not isolated poetry, because emotion and imagination enter of course into fiction. To this extent fiction may be said to tend in the direction of poetry. Poetry might be defined, untechnically, as an even more condensed form of imagination. This condensed form comes to rely, more and more, upon relationships that ply back and forth between the words, sounds, images, and ideas that make it up.

By these means Marianne Moore's bird that "steels his form straight up," in the title poem of "What Are Years?" gains its specially dramatic significance:

> . . . He
> sees deep and is glad, who
> accedes to mortality
> and in his imprisonment, rises
> upon himself as
> the sea in a chasm . . .
>
> . . . The very bird,
> grown taller as he sings, steels
> his form straight up. Though he is
> captive,
> his mighty singing
> says, satisfaction is a lowly
> thing, how pure a thing is joy.

The word "steels" is the crux of the poem. In its literal and figurative meanings the ideas of imprisonment and liberation meet. The bird, in his mighty singing, triumphs over captivity; he *becomes* the bars that confined him.

The symbols of imprisoned bird and enchasmed sea are integrally related to the form of the poem. Its rhythms rove with vinelike freedom from line to line in a profusion that is made possible by their underlying metric, one of the most exact to be found in all literature.

Wordsworth, in reaction to the poetic diction of his day, appropriated some of the language of prose. Marianne Moore is able to import its rhythms—any rhythm she wishes—and by means of her strict syllabic patterns subject them to a tension that unmistakably differentiates them from prose. Her poems are an expansion of the limits of poetry.

Poetry's clarity, then, is on a different level. The subsidiary and associational meanings of words, which are customarily slurred over in prose, contribute intensively to the total import of poetry. Rather than proceed unilaterally, from the first word on, its "meanings" are apt to start from somewhere in the middle and work both ways. That is why it requires rereading to become "clear."

This characteristic varies from poem to poem. Some depend primarily on "melodic line," like Housman's:

> With rue my heart is laden
> For golden friends I had,
> For many a rose-lipt maiden
> And many a light-foot lad.

The idea here is easy to follow, although it shrinks with reëxamina-

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tion. This is not necessarily true of poems employing "regular" metres. But as the music of poetry becomes more variable it tends to increase in the subtlety of its interrelationships, as in these lines from a sonnet of E. E. Cummings:

what a proud dreamhorse pulling
(smoothloomingly) through
(stepp)this(ing)crazily seething of
this
raving city screamingly street won-
derful
flowers . . .

Poem and subject are one. The poem is a seeable, hearable, smellable city street. Into it a horse pulls a flowercart. His hoofbeats fall exactly as they do on the pavement, a heavy plodd—"(stepp)"—for the first, a metallic click—"(ing)"—for the second. The horse comes right up beside us:

o what a proud dreamhorse moving
(whose feet
almost walk air.) now who stops.
Smiles.he
stamps

The more one reads a poem of this sort, the more meaning can be found in it. Beauty turns up unexpectedly anywhere. It appears, not by our escaping the confusions and distractions of the present, but by observing them until their relationships fall into place.

Looking at the poem again, we may notice that the horse, "whose feet almost walk air," suggests Pegasus. The poem may be taken as an allegory, a modern allegory, of poetry.

Such interpretations will not be identical from person to person, poetry being, not above explanation, but around it. It has a final mystery comparable to the mystery of life itself, which contains any explanation that can be made of it.

The very precise means used by Cummings to reproduce a city street is typical of a tendency prevalent in modern poetry: the heightening of immediacy. "Immediacy" does not mean you "get it right off." It means that what you get, when you have gotten it, is *presented*, with an effect as if it were happening right now. If you let it, it will come up very close, like the horse. It is as if the symbols had become the experience they are symbolizing and you were in fact undergoing it. This is what Archibald MacLeish may have had in mind in the statement, to which Robert Hillyer took exception: "A poem should not mean but be."

Immediacy has always been part of poetry, but seldom in such concentrated form. In the past it has been more noticeable as an element of the composition, as in Gerard Manley Hopkins's "Pied Beauty":

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-color as a
brinded cow.

This is an immediacy of detail. The second and succeeding lines present images which are the result of acute observation. This kind of immediacy demands the active participation of the reader. Rather than surrendering passively, say, to the mellifluous if somewhat cloying rhythms of a Swinburne, he must look with his mind's eye at what the poet has observed. His ear too must participate in the irregular rhythms, which he cannot—as in the case of more regular measures—fore-hear.

In general, however, earlier poets composed within a framework. The tendency in modern poetry, and all the arts, is to use immediacy as the framework; or rather, as an active principle working through all the other elements of design. The intention is less to *represent* than it is to *enter*.

Joyce's epic tragi-comedy begins, in "The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," in a babyish style reproducing the age of its protagonist, Stephen Dedalus. The style alters and deepens as Stephen grows older. In "Ulysses" other characters live in his mind, as they live in the imagination of an artist. In "Finnegans Wake" Stephen himself disappears, absorbed in the waters of the Liffey, which flows through dreams and through history just as the artist himself, fragmented, becomes one with his creation and with the world. The river of death is also the river of life.

RELATED to immediacy is another effect to be experienced in much of modern art: simultaneity. Picasso, in some of his canvases, presents many sides of an object or person at once. The visible world is not one-sided, two-dimensional; or even a series of faces, planes, or slices. But a strategic arrangement of such planes and slices can give us an experience of totality.

T. S. Eliot, in his "learned references," draws together the sensations of a mundane present and of a mythological, classical, or romantic past.

. . . yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable
voice
And still she cried, and still the world
pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.

This is an ironic compound of aggrandizement and belittlement. The dream of antique and imperishable beauty, such as Keats celebrated in his odes to the nightingale and the Grecian urn, is brought together with the grim insistence on "actuality" of modern man, who never tires of pointing out "facts," such as that the nightingale ("nightjar" to some) is really a rather raucous bird whose cry reminds one of a chamber-pot. "The Wasteland," from which this is taken, interweaves the styles of past cultures in a manner expressive of the reliquary character of modern life, composed as it so largely is of fragments of the past.

In Elizabeth Bishop's "Roosters" heroic and inglorious attributes of the domestic fowl are equally noted:

The crown of red
set on your little head
is charged with all your fighting-
blood.

Yes, that excrescence
makes a most virile presence,
plus all that vulgar beauty of iri-
descence.

This treatment is appropriate to the poet's use of the rooster as a symbol. The same bird whose "uncontrolled, traditional cries" hatefully wake us from sleep woke Peter from his triple denial; yet in that very act became the symbol of his forgiveness. Modern poetry is full of compound emotions, which often turn out to be the resolution of apparent antitheses.

The characteristics of immediacy and simultaneity, to which I have had to make so brief an allusion, are related to a new attitude of man toward himself and his world. The tendency is more and more in the direction of observing, without the intervention of authority, custom, or preconceived idea.

Countering this, conservative critics summon up conventions more suited to other periods of writing. They seem to regard similes, metaphors, symbols, metres, rhyme-schemes, and all such paraphernalia as if they existed not for use but somehow above and beyond it, like platonic archetypes.

Few people would currycomb the hood of an automobile. But the routine ways of thinking about poetry

(*Continued on page* 56)

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Wallace Stevens: Major Poet

ESTHETIQUE DU MAL. A Poem. By Wallace Stevens. Drawings by Wightman Williams. Cummington, Mass: The Cummington Press. 1945. *Unpaged.* $5. *(Edition limited to 340 copies.)*

Reviewed by GERARD PREVIN MEYER

THERE are major poets in our midst, and Wallace Stevens is one of them. He is a major poet because he has come to grips with the really major concerns of life in any age, in any time—the conflict of the imagination with reality, the nature of reality itself—and, at every step, has shown the perfect control of the artist who is master of his craft, the musician who commands his instrument. This latterday "Hartford Wit," however much he may remain caviare to the general, today stands clearly revealed as a talent that has survived the test of both coterie fame and public neglect and gone on to deepen toward a peculiar perfection.

Eloquent of his control, of his ability to "abstract reality," is the not altogether irrelevant circumstance that the diligent student of Stevens's poetry—now extended within the covers of seven books—will not discover, must search in vain to find any mention of the position (surely unique, for a poet!) of this man as a man of this world, not merely *in* it. He must go elsewhere to learn that Wallace Stevens is—to put the awful truth bluntly—vice-president of a large insurance company in the insurance capital of Hartford, Connecticut; that he is, by profession, lawyer; and that he has passed his sixty-sixth birthday. It takes an exceptional sort of man to keep his personal life so completely out of his poetry; a sort of man reticent, even shy, by nature, who is driven to speech—for he is a poet—but, being driven to it, does not begin to speak until he has chosen his words carefully.

That this is the kind of poet Stevens is is suggested also by his publishing history. Sometime in 1917, or shortly thereafter, he wrote a letter to William Carlos Williams (with whom he had appeared in "Others," together with T. S. Eliot, Alfred Kreymborg, Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, and Carl Sandburg "and Others"), in which he observed: "Well, a book of poems is a damned serious affair." He proved that he meant this by waiting until 1923 to issue his own first volume, "Harmonium." He was the last of his poetic generation to publish a book. The reader curious to learn the subsequent events of Stevens's life-in-print is referred to the excellent "Wallace Stevens Number" of *The Harvard Advocate* which appeared in December 1940; undoubtedly out of print, it may be found in the larger libraries. It tells the fascinating story of Stevens's gradual, but inevitable, emergence as much more than the "dandy," the exponent of a "bizarre, niggling sensuality" that early critics (Gorham Munson, Llewelyn Powys) thought him to be. In passing, it may be noted that the epithets "dandy," "bizarre," and "niggling" were touch off by his "exotic" vocabulary—the exoticism of which, R. P. Blackmur later pointed out in a careful essay, might have been traced to the extreme *care* with which Stevens chose the exact words he wanted for his purposes. In like measure, this poet, warned in the '20's (by John Gould Fletcher) that "he must either expand his range to take in more human experience, or give up writing altogether," has been disclosed, in his later works, to be acutely aware of "things as they are": his awareness has been so evident, his position towards other people and "the confusion in which they find themselves" so plainly stated, that his writings have been the focus of attack from the socially-minded critics.

Yet even they can never completely reject him, because—since he chooses his words carefully—he is one of the few living masters of the poetic idiom as a crystal ("tranquillizing with this jewel / the torments of our confusion")—and thus stands on unassailable ground, poetically. He is a master of what the semanticists call the plurisign—the connotative word that distinguishes poetry from prose; the resonances, both of sound and of feeling, in Stevens's language have been justly said to "extend indefinitely," to approach the infinite in fact.

Does this take him "out of this world," as his detractors (and some misguided admirers) have asserted?

Not if you ponder and accept the Stevens view of reality—call it "a willing suspension of unbelief," if you will. Now, the nature of reality has certainly been narrowed unnecessarily by our pragmatic and materialistic writers. As Stevens said at Princeton, in a lecture delivered some four years ago, "Unreal things have a reality of their own, in poetry as elsewhere." In "Harmonium," indeed, he had dared to go so far as to speak of "The imagination the one reality / in this imagined world." But Stevens is not an unreconstructed follower of Berkeley. "Reality is things as they are." It "includes all its natural images and its connotations are without limit." Stevens's reality, in short, is a reality for the atomic age. He has quoted with approval Dr. Joad's dictum:

> Every body, every quality of a body, resolves itself into an enormous number of vibrations, movements, changes. . . . Philosophy has long dismissed the notion of substance and modern physics has endorsed the dismissal. . . . How then does the world come to appear to us as a collection of solid, static objects extended in space? Because of the intellect, which presents us with a false view of it.

Nevertheless, the primary concern of Stevens has always been poetry, which requires more than reality (even though reality be more than mere): in short, imagination. We must all be immensely grateful to Wallace Stevens for his consistency in asserting and proving the superior place of the imagination in the hierarchy of values. But this imagination is not the uncontrolled sort, though it may make use of the subconscious. "The imagination loses vitality as it ceases to adhere to what is real." The fact is that Stevens, a self-confessed romantic and escapist, even defiantly proud of it, though completely aware of reality is not thrown into emotional or intellectual confusion by it; he maintains an equilibrium between imagination and reality, being possessed of a profound understanding of both these factors.

His latest book, "Esthétique du Mal," would seem to balance the two, and to reflect in its very title Stevens' preoccupation with the external problem: that of finding some answer—however much of an evasion it may *seem*—for the question of evil in the world has always challenged the explanations of religion. The very existence of pain, the poet seems to say, can be laid at the door of humankind; nature, on the other hand, is serenely indifferent:

> Except for us, Vesuvius might consume

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In solid fire the utmost earth and
know
No pain (ignoring the cocks that
crow us up
To die). This is a part of the sublime
From which we shrink. And yet, ex-
cept for us,
The total past felt nothing when de-
stroyed.
Pain, human pain
does not regard
This freedom, this supremacy, and in
Its own hallucination never sees
How that which rejects it saves it in
the end.

Here, truly, is a new, if less obvious, kind of salvation, perhaps no more difficult for the mind to accept today than the old kind based on the belief that nothing on earth is regarded with indifference in heaven—a belief sorely shaken by the existence of evil.

Stevens cannot, it appears, accept the orthodox, anthropomorphic Deity:

The fault lies with an over-human
god,
Who by sympathy has made himself
a man . . .

but chooses instead a salavation in

"the health of the world":
It seems
As if the health of the world might
be enough.

The health of the world is closely tied up with the physical: it can be defeated by "the false engagements of the mind." And again:

The greatest poverty is not to live
In a physical world.

This is a theme the poet has celebrated for a long time, as far back as "Peter Quince at the Clavier," in fact, with its "Beauty is momentary in the mind—/The fitful tracing of a portal; /But in the flesh it is immortal." Because of the domination of this theme, his reaction to "ideological" revolutions might have been predicted:

Revolution
Is the affair of logical lunatics.

Nor is a compassion that can "take in more human experience" lacking in that noble elegy beginning, "How red the rose that is the soldier's wound," which has already been anthologized, and which, nevertheless, deserves quotation entire here, on its own merits alone and also because it gives the lie once more to the persistent fiction that Wallace Stevens's certainly special world is not tangential to the "commonal":

How red the rose that is the soldier's
wound,
The wounds of many soldiers, the
wounds of all
The soldiers that have fallen, red in
blood,
The soldier of time grown deathless
in great size.

A mountain in which no ease is ever
found,
Unless indifference to deeper death
Is ease, stands in the dark, a shadows'
hill,
And there the soldier of time has
deathless rest.

Concentric circles of shadows, motionless
Of their own part, yet moving on the
wind,
From mystical convolutions in the
sleep
Of time's red soldier deathless on his
bed.

The shadows of his fellows ring him
round
In the high night, the summer
breathes for them
Its fragrance, a heavy somnolence,
and for him,
For the soldier of time, it breathes a
summer sleep,

In which his wound is good because
life was.
No part of him was ever part of death.
A woman smoothes her forehead with
her hand
And the soldier of time lies calm be-
neath that stroke.

The flawless execution is peculiarly Stevens: the manipulation of sound and beat, the Rimbaudian utilization of vowel-color, the alliteration-rhyme, the delicate shadings of feeling, the sensitive mirror of nature.

But if the object continues to evade the search, may not the object itself be in the search? and what matter, if only the search "give pleasure," as Stevens has said "the supreme fiction" must? That certainly this poetry does, to a supreme degree.

WALLACE STEVENS: *Man Off the Street . . .* WILL VANCE

WALLACE STEVENS, born in Reading, Pennsylvania, October 2, 1879, remains the Lone Wolf of American Poetry. Men of letters, some of them prominent, and visiting firemen with gilt-edged introductions have stormed his Hartford fortress in vain—or to their deep regret. And woe to the autograph-hunter!

Stevens studied law at Harvard and New York Law School, and was admitted to the New York bar in 1904. Since 1916 he has been associated with the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company of which, in 1934, he became vice-president.

The wonder is that he has ever troubled to publish anything at all. Notwithstanding, some innate yearning to see his name in print and "become known" must have prompted him, in 1914, to try for the $100 prize offered by Harriet Monroe, then editor of *Poetry*. Although she had her November, 1914, "War Number" all made up, she tore it apart to make room for "Phases," four poems submitted by the then unknown Wallace Stevens. The following year, *Poetry* again awarded $100 to Stevens for his one-act, free-verse play, "Three Travelers Watch a Sunrise."

A stern self-critic, Wallace Stevens has never reprinted either his first playlet nor the second, "Carlos Among the Candles," which first saw the footlights in Milwaukee and was later put on in New York's Neighborhood Playhouse. It was not until 1923 that Carl Van Vechten could persuade Alfred A. Knopf to publish Steven's first book of verse, "Harmonium."

Nevertheless, both before and after the appearance of "Harmonium," his poems made the anthologies, particularly "Peter Quince at the Clavier."

Louis Untermeyer has called Stevens's poetry a "strangely fastidious and hermetic art." Allen Tate calls him "the most finished poet of his age." Van Wyck Brooks likens his succession of glittering images to "the shattered fragments of a stained-glass window." Delmore Schwartz, writing in the *Harvard Advocate's* "Wallace Stevens Number" (December, 1940), declared that Stevens does not write dramatic poetry nor present human beings. On the contrary, "we are presented almost always with the poet, or the protagonist of the poem, in isolation before the tableaux of Nature and Society, meditating upon them. . . . Taken generally, Stevens's perspective is that of the man of art, the museum—and concert-goer, the student of French Poetry . . . the esthete in the best sense of the word."

Hartford people know little more of Wallace Stevens than that he handles insurance claims and that his handwriting is virtually microscopic. Of his physical attributes, Arthur Davison Ficke has written: "A big, slightly fat, awfully competent-looking man. You expect him to roar, but when he speaks there emerges the gravest, softest, most subtly modulated voice I've ever heard—a voice on tiptoe at dawn!"

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Various Quills

A WORDSWORTH ANTHOLOGY. Collected by Laurence Housman. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1946. 151 *pp.* $2.

THE TIME PIECE. A Poem by Frank Kendon. The Macmillan Company (Cambridge University Press). 1946. 73 *pp.* $1.75.

THE STAR AND THE LEAF. By Adelaide Love. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 94 *pp.* $2.

MY TALON IN YOUR HEART. By Nancy Bruff. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1946. 60 *pp.* $2.

NO SPLENDOR PERISHES. By Beverley Githens. La Porte, Ind.: The Dierkes Press. 50 *pp.* $1.75.

LIFE, LOVE, AND THE WEATHER. By Ted Robinson. (Privately Printed, Cleveland: The Rowfant Club.) 1945. 123 *pp.*

AND LEAST LOVE. By Robert Dunn. (Privately Printed, Katonah, N. Y.) 92 *pp.*

FAUNS, SATYRS, & A FEW SAGES. By Bernard D. N. Grebanier. Boston, Mass.: The Mosher Press. 1945. 136 *pp.* $3.

YOUNG VOICES. Edited by Kenneth Gould and Joan Coyne. New York: Harper & Bros. 1946. 401 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

CONCERNING the anthology Laurence Housman has made of the best of Wordsworth, it is well worth anyone's purchase; if only for the foreword alone, which originally appeared as an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*. A reviewer has already pointed out that it was not Wordsworth who supplied the "dear brother Jim" lines, but Coleridge, and the name was "Jem" at that; but it gives Mr. Housman opportunity for a rather rare parody. And it is true that Wordsworth "made the mistake of thinking, apparently, that when a man of high imaginative powers like himself set himself to *imagine*, all that came into his head was imaginative, or at least suitable material for the imagination to rest on." That is not to take away one whit from the magnificence of Wordsworth at his best. Or rather I should say "nobility," for Wordsworth's aim was simplicity not magnificence. In any event this small book is a good introduction to Wordsworth, with the convenient detours pointed out for the running reader of a hasty day.

Frank Kendon, of "The Time Piece," in his love of earthly English things and his half-lyrical narrative, could be called in a sense a modern Wordsworth. Some time ago Mark Van Doren wrote "A Winter Diary" in verse, and this English winter diary is in somewhat the same spirit, though it has not the strength, fullness, and variety of Van Doren's—rather this strain:

Bring in a world, but fasten the door awhile;
Peel off the weather; settle, neighbour;
Let darkness rattle; let the gale roar;
Fetch forth the kettle.

But that is good writing, you will allow; and there is much reward in phrase and in lyric feeling in this little book.

Adelaide Love and Nancy Bruff both have their claims upon the attention. But Miss Love can write, "Emboldened by the heady flagons quaffed of sparkling air," which is sheer cliché, and Miss Bruff seems to me not quite to have shaken off the influence both of Emily Dickinson and of Stephen Crane. Miss Love's book may be more popular, but Miss Bruff's poetry has the finer edge. Her dedication is to one who "believes that poems should be reduced to their ultimate potency." Certainly that was the gift of her chief influences. But I think that in the matter of exact epithet this poet still has something to learn. Miss Love's work has the virtue of being entirely understandable, but her phrase can always be easily anticipated. That is the trouble also with the poetry of Beverley Githens. If poetry were a "whodunit," hunting for the guilty word, I could, blindfolded, put my finger on the culprit in either book.

Ted Robinson is a veteran columnist, and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* has for years been in his debt, figuratively speaking. I am glad the Rowfant Club has done him proud with a most attractive book of his verse. It concludes with a moving poem to our late President, one with which I am in most hearty accord. "The Messiah of the Worms" is a good grim ballad, and, being a cat admirer, I like this last verse from "Origins:"

And when dog and horse and man
Are forgotten many a year,
Heirs to it all,
The cats will crawl
Over the moonlit sphere!

Robert Dunn began his life as an explorer. His book of poems is a personal matter, a gathering of all he has written in the course of an active life; good, bad, and indifferent. He says that in reading lately about existentialism he thinks it relates to certain of his stanzas. Some of his poems were written on the Klondike trail, in British Columbia, off Malaspina Glacier, in Martinique, New Hampshire, Korea, in Asia Minor, and on war ships.

And often they are not in the least what you thought they were going to be. They are rough and ready, yet show a highly individual and inquiring mind. In Bernard Grebanier's songs, epigrams, and pieces after the Greek, one of the most successful is "Wasted Tears." I like also

Lean Lawrence in sounding a trumpet just blew it,
And fell, in so doing, headforemost
right through it.

To conclude, "Young Voices" is a book both of poetry and prose, a quarter century of high school student writing, selected from the awards made by *Scholastic*, the best school and college magazine in the country. Among many, Kimball Flaccus and Dorothy Emerson were prizewinners; but now the most famous is the extraordinary novelist, Gladys Schmitt.

Job

By Witter Bynner

STILL plagued by small infirmities
Like an unworthy Job,
Like him I cover all of these
With a firmamental robe.

Boils bubble over me, loved ones die,
The last is not so small,
But still the ample, star-scarred sky
Is a concealing shawl.

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The Poems of Franz Werfel

POEMS. By Franz Werfel. Translated by Edith Abercrombie Snow. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. 1945. 119 *pp.* $2.

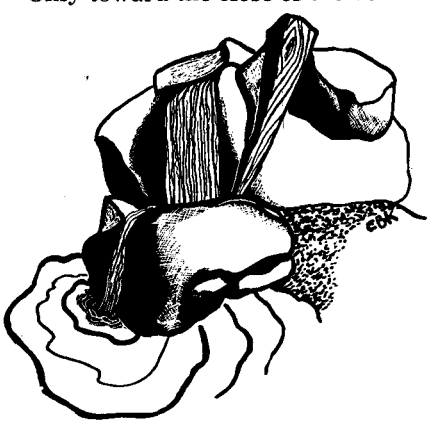
Reviewed by ALFRED KREYMBORG

OUR university presses deserve high credit these days for their growing industry in publishing creative and critical volumes of a distinguished order and regardless of the gold standard by which commercial publishers weigh their leading productions. Franz Werfel's name is not new to average readers; they have read his novels and attended his plays and movies in the millions. Up to now, however, they have had little or no opportunity to acquaint themselves with Werfel's most intimate expression, for, as he observed not long before his death: "I am myself only in my poetry."

In his own foreword to this volume he indicates that the poems selected for translation were chosen from seven volumes issued between 1908 and 1938, and that the tasks of translation were a collaboration between himself and Edith Abercrombie Snow. Despite the fact that "translated poems are an impossibility," Werfel pays tribute to Mrs. Snow's "years of unrelenting struggle" and submits that "the translator's art is one of the most difficult and one of the most unrewarding arts." A comparison of the German text with the English on opposite pages gives the impression that the translator was wise in not attempting absolutely faithful renditions of the original meters and cadences. Had she done so she would have reared many a wretched monster. She has attempted to produce poems in English which are for the most part poems in themselves.

Werfel's lyrical art has the tragic solemnity of a man whose self-concern ranges the cycle of life and death, of the here and the hereafter, of his inescapable relation to Adam's family. And through the exaltation of the mystic he finds deepest and highest communion with nature and with God. In his ardent romanticism, a development of the dominant tone of the nineteenth century, he is fully aware of realities, and his most appealing images are those which deal with some downright contact with everyday people and things and the application of the simple and uncomplex to the universal. Goethe once said to Eckermann, his youthful amanuensis, that German poets often ruin their poems with philosophic flights or abstractions. While this criticism fits Franz Werfel's art on occasions when he draws some moral which is implicit in the body of a poem, most of the poems are completely lyrical or dramatic.

Only toward the close of the volume



does the Nazi shadow appear, and the plight of the emigrant. But the supreme kinship of Man is with greater states than the temporal, and his range much broader than the range of a single era. This belief is orchestrated in "The Good Man:"

The power is his, the regiment of stars,
He holds the world enfisted like a nut,
And laughter wreathes his face eternally,
War is his being, triumph is his gait.

And where he stands, extending wide his hands,
Where his tyrannic call goes thundering down,
There crash creation's gross injustices,
And all becomes as God, and one.

The good man's tears remain invincible,
Fabric of earth, and water of the cosmos.
Where his good tears drop down and penetrate,
Each form absorbs itself and is renewed.

No other wrath can be compared to his.
He stands amid his own life's burning pyre,
And at his feet the devil coils himself,
A lost and crushed-out dragon underfoot.

When he departs, two towering angels stand
At either side, their heads merged in the spheres,
And shout, rejoicing, under gold and fire,
And strike upon their shields with thunderous sound.

The Tomb of General Gordon

(ST. PAUL'S, LONDON)

By Lt. A. L. Glaze

A FORGOTTEN man but for saccharine sounding syllables
Here resting a famous dust in foggy shadow
Where curious idlers stumble against the bier,
With his face too dark to see and shapeless robe,
He somewhat resembles a patriarchal Arab,
One of the kind that waved his painted gun,
Summoned his sons, and rode off to the east
To badger General Gordon; and there's something else
Of the ludicrous. His epitaph, encomium,
Or what you will, conveys in musty rime
That this old zealot died to save some women,
Children, slaves and assorted hangers-on—
Egyptian beings of another faith!
He was religion and charity entire,
In holy causes, but there at blistered walls,
Watching the sun whirl dust in the Arab camp
That patiently sat till the wretched death of Khartoum,
He knew that those who fainted in the breathless streets
And leaned upon their guns against the walls,
Little caring how they died, by heat or Allah,
And he himself, were tools of polity.
He knew while facing that determined death
We do not know of, the risk that risks all
For a bit of pride; white haired gaunt old man
With fierce brow and contemptuous decision,
Flailing a sword perhaps at the head of the stair
Until cut down. And if he saw his tomb,
And read its message with a shaking head,
He'd stretch his neck and roar out such a laugh
That all the mice and sextons would come running
And see him there and chatter the desecration.

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Three Techniques

COME BACK TO EARTH. By Roy Helton. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1946. 71 *pp.* $2.
AGAINST THE CIRCLE. By Brewster Ghiselin. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1946. 87 *pp.* $2.
BRIEF ENTERPRISE. By Alice Monks Mears. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1946. 61 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

ONE of the poems in Roy Helton's "Come Back to Earth" begins:

Not when my mother bore this flesh
To scheme and scatter, reap and roam,
And grow from nothing to a man,
But when this flesh found place and home,
That hour, that hour my life began . . .

The underlying theme of Mr. Helton's philosophy is that man's "place and home," his wisdom and salvation, lie in the acceptance and submission to the supremacy of nature, the eternal goodness and truth of the natural world. In gentle, melodic, and traditional verse he tells us to return to the comfort of earth, the constancy of the stars, the strength of the hills, the solace of a rose "undismayed by the battles of ten million men." Unfortunately, however, one feels that Mr. Helton too often speaks with a rather glib and facile sentimentality; his tone is inspirational rather than inspired. There is too much a flavor of uplift and moralizing, of consoling truisms, of easy generalities. Through the ages poets have turned from their personal anguish and their sense of man's impermanence to the enduring things of the universe, the recurrent miracle of life which brings the snowdrop from the snow, April after April. But it is not always the complete answer to man's search for reassurance to assure him that

A hundred thousand years from now
Upon this rocky hill,
The golden rod will break the sod
And Jack will mate with Jill.

The sun will wake the robin
To fill the earth with song . . .

or that

Neither debt nor politics
Disturb the firmament.

There is very little magic or eloquence in such lines as

For light and love,
No lesser goals pursuing,
Demand of toil
A joy in each day's doing . . .

Let human progress
Move by easy stages.
First rule yourselves
And then correct the ages.

Because Mr. Helton in his earlier work has shown himself capable of much better poetry than is present in this collection, one cannot help but feel impatient with the lack of distinction, both in content and expression, of "Come Back to Earth."

Brewster Ghiselin is a young poet of considerable talent. He is an experimenter in slant rhyme, in untraditional form, in freer rhythms, and for the most part his technique is disciplined and expert. Only occasionally do his poems seem mannered, and more an exercise in sound effect than the expression of a deeply felt poetic impulse. Sometimes in his effort to create a startling or original impression he twists words out of their ordinary usage—"We do not hear the ancient darkness thicking," for example—or "the cat, heavying with harsher fur"—certainly awkward and obviously contrived artificialities. And he sometimes appears to lack that poetic discrimination which would let him see the essential absurdity in figures of speech such as "Time like a melted saddle on the crawl of the sea . . ." or "The mandrills of mania singing of their sanities" (whatever that may mean).

But these are extreme instances. He is capable of accurate, unaffected imagery and observation, when he speaks, for instance, of the snake

coiled in loose folds upon silence
The head hard as a fist . . .
The mouth a cat's mouth yawning . . .

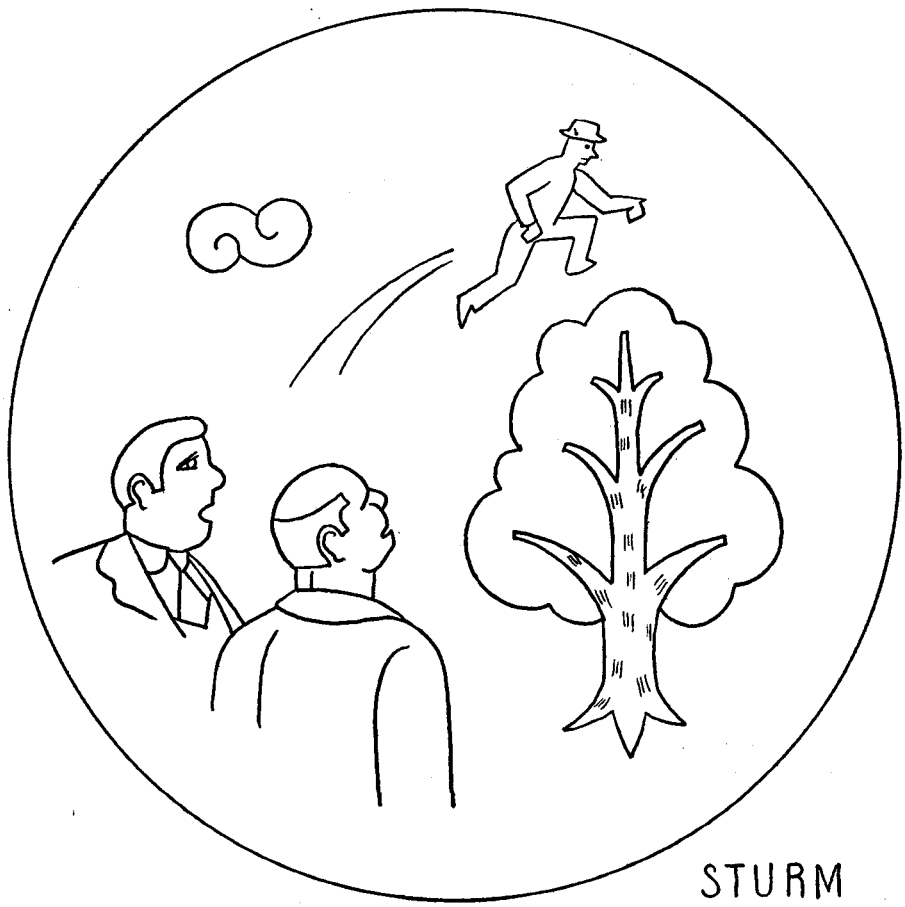
or of shorebirds "with wings like thin fins against the morning," or when he describes the listening quality of a hot summer afternoon, with the "vroom of bees," or "sea-rocks dolphin-dark."

And he can write with dignity and profundity of man's eternal search for a symbolic New World, men who find wherever they go

. . . the old world only, they found the known
Measures of the moods of their own minds:
The blue mountains' dying, the plain's surmise,
The bones and bountiful nakedness and thought
Of barbarous rock, and the green peace of earth;
They found the hostile forests of the heart.

The best in this book is a poetic achievement of no mean quality; the weaknesses I am sure Mr. Helton will master or outgrow. For all his experimenting, he is at heart a traditionalist—and of the high tradition of fine and enduring poetry.

"Brief Enterprise," by Alice Monks Mears, received the 1945 Annual



" . . . just nervous energy."

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Award of the League to Support Poetry. It is a first volume of undoubted distinction, the expression of a mind mature, perceptive and alert. These are metaphysical poems, for the most part, in which the phenomena of the natural world become the symbols of the inner world of the spirit. Mrs. Mears is profoundly moved by man's eternal farewell to his life and his loves, of time that is

> . . . only the wheeling moment
> Of the incredible wing or blade . . .
> All that we touch is motion, substance is flight.

But she counsels us, too, that something cancels out and annuls the farewell; the spirit pauses,

> listening to love—as though it heard
> half answer to its earth-doomed quest
> Within the silence of the seed.

There are occasionally overtones of other metaphysical poets in her work. Mrs. Mears's apostrophes to the elements of air, earth, water, and fire in her poem "Knowledge of April" cannot help but bring to mind Elinor Wylie's "Hymn to Earth." Beautifully done as Mrs. Mears's poem is, these lines are reminiscent:

> Air, who with sweet drink excel
> To fill the invisible
> Thirst of every cell,
> In your familiar presence let this lover
> No treacherous element uncover.
> Be clean, be fountain of pure space
> In the remote or prisoned place.

> Earth, farmer extravagant
> In seed, in crop, in want,
> Mark, while you ceaselessly plant
> His rich body yet uncoveted.
> Bid him godspeed. You keep the last bed,
> Dear host, press not your hospitality,
> His destination's your locality.

But only occasionally does she speak in accents heard before. Her own idiom is distinguished and individual, rich with vivid metaphor and imagery. It is not the simple and easy poetry which one who runs may read, but it is never confused and obscure. There is overtone as well as the music itself, and perception and poetic intensity—that heightened awareness which makes "all common things and dear . . . so variable and strange." She can be ironic and unsparing, as in the section of poems on the war when she writes with fierce anger of "the niggard heart, the professor brain" which feels no need to meet the evil year. "Be sure," she counsels them, "There are the valiant still. . . . Only their bodies build your barricade." And she can turn with gentleness to write a lullaby for all children.

Testament Against Terror

THE BRIDGE. Poems 1939-1945. *By Ruth Pitter. New York: The Macmillan Co.* 1946. 54 *pp.* $1.50.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

FOR ten years, or maybe longer, I have had the delight of Ruth Pitter's poems; a delight as private and unspoiled by crowding as our world of print affords. Once she won the rare Hawthornden Prize, and notable hands have been proud to acclaim her—Belloc, Masefield, James Stephens. But in the small parishes of my acquaintance she remains almost unknown. There will never be a train of follow-my-leader corybants for such oddly beautiful, tender, humble music; or for her caustic raillery either, when she feels to indulge it. I see her, in the cottage

somewhere in Essex where there is a yew tree between her and the storm; a child singing to herself? or a champion sharpening her sword? I only know that for ten years my private test of any anthology of modern verse has been, was there in it anything by Ruth Pitter?

Her books, whether like this in the more muted vein, or in the old pre-war gaiety of "A Mad Lady's Garland," must take their own time with you. No reviewer can do them sudden rough justice. I advise you, if you have a craving for the tingling-tart, for the inside-outs of feeling, for the taste of snow or the smell of moss, a dull ache for the kind of thoughts you would like to think but never have—if, more freakish still, you have a gust for words used with incomparable freshness, the joys of irregular pause and a seventeenth-century swiftness of attack—a sort of cross-biology between Vassar and John Donne—I advise you, lay this book on your table quietly. Come to it from time to time and speir your way into it.

But maybe you're not humble enough; few are. This little book is a testament of struggle against despair; it leans on very mean but meaningful things for its joy: birds, bats, insects; weeds and pebbles and shells; the flow of rivers, the lacy bitterness of beaches. To have written these poems during the years that the Luftwaffe hath eaten was a kind of valor that wears no ribbons. Like the captured crow Miss Pitter mentions, "every day he lost a little shine." Life was *wicked*—a word she uses often, but always with care and stunning effect. She can phrase enormous things with such small undertones; just opens her mind, like a child—a careworn child.

> I go about, but cannot find
> The blood-relations of the mind.

But she has her own comfort, and offers it fullhanded to those who will listen:

> Are you there? Can you hear?
> Listen, try to understand. . . .
> Who can be what the weed was
> In the empty afternoon?
> Who can match me the wild grass,
> Singing its forgotten tune:
> Who is equal to that shell,
> Whose spiral is my parable?

I wish I might copy out for you "The Swan Bathing," or that marvelous poem "The Sparrow's Skull—Memento Mori," written at the Fall of France. These are too strong for excerpt, and jump-seat readers. She knows the secret—there is only one secret—

> Sorrow is not the truth.
> These lovely shapes of sorrow are empty vessels
> Waiting for wine.

Blood-relations of the mind, who are willing to empty themselves for strong drink, will be grateful for this book. It has the wine.

ADVICE TO AN OVERSENSITIVE POET

By Irene Wilde

> LET what you love remain aloof,
> Uncommonplace, forever rare,
> Beyond the avid reach of proof.
> The curse of intimacy would tear
> The curtain from the hidden shrine.
> The mystery within the core
> Would vanish like the candleshine,
> And leave you nothing to adore—
> Dante saw Beatrice thrice, no more.

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Two Poets on the Teaching of Poetry

By LEONORA SPEYER

A LEARNED man, Sir Herbert Grierson, once said to me, "There is too much talking about poetry, too much theorizing. Poetry suffers from the mere approach of prose; the more it is discussed, the more it is robbed of its magic," adding mournfully, "and no one, probably, has talked about it more than I have." And yet, it must be talked about, thought about, and discussed, if we are to read it with true understanding and delight, and certainly if we are to write it or teach it. For it is an art, and like all arts it must be learned. (I think it is unpremeditated only to the lark.)

I am sometimes asked with a fine irony, "What—can you *teach* poetry?" My answer to that, and rather tartly given, is that I cannot teach the student talent, no amount of study will contrive a talent, that being God's affair; but having the gift, "through Grace," as John Masefield says, it must be developed, the art must be learned. To quote Siegfried Sassoon, "A man may be a born poet, but he has to make himself an artist as well. He must master the instrument."

The actual process of poetry-writing, the knowledge of the forms and patterns, the terms, the play, the infinite devices; the traditions; the immense variety of words, their world of synonyms, their color, harmony, counterpoint; in fact, the English language, prosody, imposing and enthralling; these can indeed be, must be, learned. What Alice Meynell calls "The Laws of Verse"—

Dear Laws, be wings to me!
The feather merely floats, O be it heard
Through weight of life—the skylark's gravity—
That I am not a feather, but a bird!

—learn the Laws! Once mastered, free yourself from their too trammelling influences, by all means; stray from them as often as you please, but know *where* to stray, and *how*. The written word: someone, surely a poet, though his name is not remembered, wrote this, centuries ago:

The written word
Should be clean as bone,
Clear as light,
Firm as stone.
Two words are not
As good as one.

(The eloquent implication!) Of course you can teach, and learn, poetry. Yeats studied all his life. What a lesson is in that significant comment of his:

I said, a line will take us hours maybe,
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
The stitching and unstitching has been naught.

There is not much stitching and unstitching in some of the hasty and cocksure writing of today. I advised a friend, "You ought to work over that poem, perhaps rewrite it entirely." "I know," he replied, rather dolefully, "but I might be writing a new poem while I was mulling over this one." I believe in "mulling over" a poem; in "stitching and unstitching." Edwin Arlington Robinson once told me it had taken him three years to get a certain sonnet "into shape." (That master of the sonnet.) "How shall I learn to know what to write about?" a student once asked me. "How indeed?" was my not very illuminating reply. Elizabeth Drew's reflection is more satisfactory: "How poetry comes to the poet is a mystery." And I remember Kahlil Gibran telling me, "I do not write my poems. They write me."

Robert Frost declared to a class of students, "I am not a teacher, but an awakener." And speaking of metaphors, he observed, "I would be willing to throw away everything else for metaphor," and he added, "I do not think anybody ever knows the use of metaphor unless he has been properly educated in poetry."

It is eight years since I was suddenly and rather agitatedly called to the telephone by Audrey Wurdemann, Joseph Auslander's wife. Joe lay with a broken leg. Would I take charge of his poetry class at Columbia for the rest of the semester, the while Joe mended? Little did I surmise, foresee, what that small, if intimidating, act of service to a friend would mean in my life. For Joseph, healed and nimble again, betook him-

(*Continued on page 52*)

By ROBERT HILLYER

IN music and painting the artist-pupil relationship is of long standing. We recall the great ateliers of the Renaissance where a score of pupils studied under some established master, helping him with the details of mural and portrait, and then going forth to their own accomplishment and their own pupils. The art of music has shown the same fostering relationships. A pleasant story comes to mind of how Vincent D'Indy became the pupil of César Franck. Franck had marked some revisions on the score of one of the young D'Indy's quartets. "The old fool!" muttered D'Indy, and flung the manuscript into a drawer. Months later, looking it over again, he went through Franck's changes and was overwhelmed by the number of unobtrusive improvements. Immediately he sought out Franck. "May I become your pupil?" "Ah, certainly," said Franck, "come to me every day at six." "But, master, that will interrupt your supper hour." "No, indeed," answered Franck, smiling, "six o'clock in the morning."

In poetry the relationship between artist and pupil has not been so definite until quite recently. Its place in the contemporary poetry of America is a new phenomenon. When I was Boylston professor at Harvard, advanced students applying for my courses would frequently introduce themselves as graduates not of some particular college but of some poet. Consider this random and partial list of the recent poets who are or have been teachers: Robert Frost, William Ellery Leonard, David Morton, Edward Davison, Grant Code, Mark Van Doren, Robert Francis, Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Arthur Mizener, Countee Cullen, Randall Jarrell, Richard Blackmur, Allen Tate, Horace Gregory, Ivor Winters, Theodore Spencer, Dudley Fitts, Delmore Schwartz, Richard Eberhart, John Holmes, Leonora Speyer, Wilbert Snow, Robert P. Tristram Coffin, Howard Mumford Jones, Theodore Morrison, Conrad Aiken, Genevieve Taggard, and many more, newcomers and veterans, of every variety of poetic experience and opinion. Not all are teachers of verse specifically; William Ellery Leonard, for example, was a professor of the classics; but directly or indirectly their combined influence on the future of American poetry is incalculable.

We may add those who give occa-

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sional courses of lectures or who contribute their seasoned counsel at the writers' conferences of the summer schools. We might also include the names of such long-established editors as Louis Untermeyer and William Rose Benét, whose relations with younger poets must of necessity be partly pedagogical. Editors who fail to edit would be supine creatures; it is entirely within their province to suggest, and according to the testimony of the neophytes, they do.

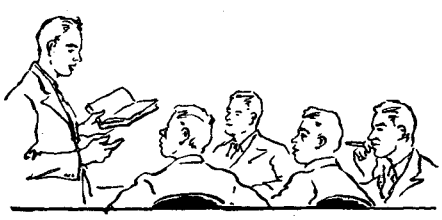
Having reference to my own experience as poet-teacher, I should say that his function is to provide a short-cut for younger writers in order that the period of technical maturity may more nearly coincide with youthful power and sensitiveness. We should like to modify the old proverb *si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait.* Poetry cannot be taught; neither can music or painting; but orchestration, perspective, versification—these can all be taught. To attempt to teach art results merely in gassy impressionism, but artistry is communicable. It is well for a poet to explore a technique for himself, but it is a waste of time for him to stumble into the same old mistakes that have slowed the development of so many a poet in the past.

There are few rules in any craft of which we can be dogmatically sure. In writing, for instance, we may speak with certainty of the difference between recurrent and non-recurrent rhythms. We can say further that recurrent rhythms are the customary design for poetry. But we cannot say that poetry must always employ recurrent rhythms.

In my own teaching I am careful to separate what for convenience I call dogmas, unbreakable and very few, from principles, which can be broken but should not be broken merely through ignorance. The principles are many and to a degree flexible. The particular degree will always be a subject for debate. My practice is to teach the principles strictly and to require exercises in detailed conformity with traditional rules. This rigidity serves as a point of departure to whatever range of freedom may attract the poet in his later work. Sometimes the resistance of a set form may by a sort of intellectual friction prove an unexpected stimulus. For example, in "Copper Sun," by the late Countee Cullen, there is a group of poems entitled "In Cambridge" consisting of the better exercises Mr. Cullen composed in my course in versification. They stand up well with the other poems.

The arrangement of my course was simple. We studied each form of English verse in chronological order and wrote examples of each, beginning with lines in the alliterative pattern of the Anglo-Saxons, then introducing rhyme in its oldest form, the four-stress couplet, and gradually moving forward through the centuries and their attendant forms, the ballad stanza, the Elizabethan sonnet, the lyric stanza, the closed heroic couplet of the Augustans, and so on down to some of the more experimental forms of recent years. This provided every writer with a metrical development parallel to the actual history of our meters. By the time he had finished the course he had experienced for himself the prosodic growth of his art.

No wise poet-teacher will intrude on the prejudices and opinions of his pupils. This advice becomes easier to follow as one becomes older. Having begun my own career at the height of the Imagist controversy,



with its corollary of free verse, I was under contentious circumstances from the first and in unpopular dissent from the great names of the day. Since then I have seen so many emerge and fade, or emerge and shine, that I am more and more confirmed in that attitude of quietism, even toward the things I deplore, which early saved me much turmoil. Yet, hearing young poets lay about them until only their own names and those of their group are left, I understand, as long as personal animus is not too eloquent, that the fierceness is natural, at times admirable.

For my own part, I have tried not to take sides in my courses. It is especially hard not to do so when some amiable fellow defends a position which he knows to be mine. The one I have held from the beginning is that Time decides all things against a bigger background than most are aware of. My own taste is based on the classics and the Elizabethans, with a reverent glance toward the eighteenth century and no contempt for the great Victorians. That leaves me with the metaphysicals and the romantics—the two groups now most powerfully influential—on the fringe of my liking. T. S. Eliot, whose commanding position among his followers and their followers even unto the third and fourth generation is beyond dispute, and whose name will doubtless be affixed to this age of poetry, has himself provided the best epigram on its weakness:

. . . our lot crawls between dry ribs
To keep its metaphysics warm.

I should have hesitated to write such a statement lest I be thought extreme.

I feel free to express such sentiments in print or in conversation, but in the classroom or in conference, no. It is unfair to measure a manuscript by preconceived notions of what it should be, irrespective of the author's intentions. There is an approximate right or wrong in metrics, in rhyme, in diction. That is all grist to the mill. Also, I am within my rights in confessing a failure to understand some passage submitted to me for criticism. The comment may be met with raised eyebrows to indicate so much the worse for me, poor dullard; but at any rate, incomprehension is my prerogative. But I have no right to suggest revisions merely in the light of my own stylistic preferences. It is not my province to tinct a purpose with influences outside my pupil's intention.

Some guidance from the point of view of clearness and simplicity is

The Floating City

By Genevieve Ellis

SHOW me your mist-borne dream of rising marble,
Your clouded castles and your starry steeples.
Open your streaming corridors where warble
The voices of your weaving puppet-peoples.
Down from your fiery windows send to me
Divergent banners fusing light and sound,
Streaking the sky with shafts of melody
And shaking like a thunder through the ground.

I dare not rise and seek your ruthless mouth,
Caress your armor, feel your pulses speak,
Nor lose my heart where braver ones go thronging.
You are espoused to genius. I am weak,
Requiring verdant meadows sloping south
And bitter-sweet, lethargic weeds of longing.

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often necessary, especially when a young writer has absorbed all the oddities and superficialities of style without familiarity with basic tradition. The sprung rhythms of Hopkins, the broken couplets of Donne, the random cadences of Whitman are too soon attempted by some who have not yet learned to write a plain quatrain and who still count five on their fingers to be sure they have written a pentameter. I have received ounces of Pound from poets who have not heard of Drayton or Marvell and to whom the Elizabethans are a *museum clausum* to be invoked but not entered.

With due adjustment to each individual, the poet-teacher is wise, on the whole, to remain aloof from any literary quarrel not involving the facts of technique. His participation invites disagreement, in which case he may well be thought to be taking advantage of his greater age and experience to bully his students. Or—and this would be disastrous — he might encounter too much agreement and find himself saddled with disciples. I know several writers who enjoy saving disciples and are like people in rooms filled with delicate bric-a-brac which one misstep would shatter. One of them likes to see his disciples literally at his feet, and any afternoon you will find him at tea with a coterie of youngsters sitting around him on the floor. For my part, I should feel more akin to the embarrassment of Walter Pater who, when an Oxford undergraduate served him his tea kneeling, muttered, "Get up, you fool!" To have to live up to a set personality, always to be Sir Oracle—how formidable!

The lasting pleasure for the poet-teacher is in the careers of younger artists whose work may be somewhat sharper for the hints he has let fall. At least he has provided them with a course in which they may obtain academic credit for the thing they wish most to do. Some of them become his peers, some choose editing or publishing, or themselves become teachers. Some will resent him to the end of their days. Some will become his close friends. And there will always be those who will maintain that they have reached success in spite of his efforts.

Whatever be their individual reactions, the younger generation is more thoroughly equipped with consciousness of technique, its use and background, than were their predecessors. Everywhere young poets of surer strain, many of them the graduates of the artist-pupil relationship, are coming to the fore, and we may listen for more eloquence and less noise on Parnassus.

Basic English Versus Poetry

DAVID HUDSON

POEMS are often written out of non-poetic circumstances. Last summer, at Hyannis State Teachers College, I was in demand as a living specimen of a poet, and spent evenings visiting cabins, reading from "How Can the Heart Forget?" published by the Wilmington Poetry Society, of which I am a co-editor with Jeannette Slocomb Edwards and Edwin Sawdon. One teacher said, "You're a poet. Why don't you try to write a poem in Basic?" Thereupon, she handed me a copy of the general 850 word list (copies of which are available, for a slight charge, from the Orthological Institute, Harvard University).

The next day, the first original poem in Basic English came into being, during fifteen minutes of a very dull lecture on American literature. My only knowledge of Basic has been acquired from reading the list. Therefore anyone could turn his hand to writing poetry in Basic. You will see that I was catching at words (the first word on the list is the first in the poem), but that an idea came through:

THE EDGE OF EARTH*

Come with all change
for if you take loss
as but a chance
you will be able
to give out little,
moving in fact
without seeming to put
your hand up through the cloud;
for the edge of earth
is in yourself.

In line 6, I had used *move* as a true verb, when the word's use is as a noun, whose meaning may be expanded by the suffixes: er, ed, ing:

move	*fold*	*start*	*level*
mover(s)	folder(s)	starter	leveler
moved	folded	started	leveled
moving	folding	starting	leveling

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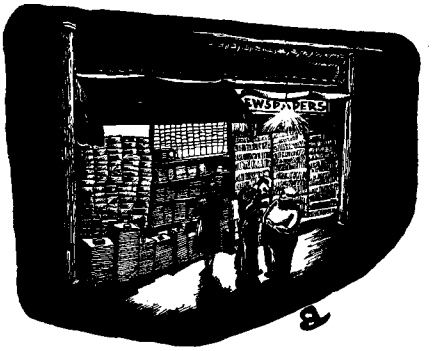

There are three hundred nouns for the developing. Plurals make use of "s." There are one hundred general qualities, and fifty opposite. Adverbs may be formed from these by suffixing -ly: *acid—acidly, hollow—hollowly, wrong—wrongly.* Degrees of comparison are obtained by "more" and "most." Measures, periods of time, and international words in English form are also at your call. Questions are by inversion, and use of "do."

With the connective words I found myself wanting to use *each* rather than *every; yet* rather than *but, even, still;* and I had great difficulty persuading myself to use *will* for all three persons, and to avoid use of *must* when *have to* is the Basic equivalent, and *may* a parallel meaning. However, habits such as these are easily adapted in conformity to the Basic system—and I do not find myself wanting to use *have to* for *must* in unlimited English poetry. Writing in Basic, as I see it, is simply following the rules on the list as you follow the rules of regular grammar: you merely interpret the guide signs, and take the direction you desire.

That you are limited in your choice of words and combinations does not mean that you are tied down; rather are you directed toward words, of necessity. All the technical craftsmanship of poetry is required for such experimentation: for with only eighteen verbs, conjugable in all tenses, you fall into poetry of dashes and ellipses that fail to resolve, unless you know how to write a predicated sentence.

The matter of rhythm is never a problem in choice of words, but of selection, so is not affected by the Basic choice of vocabulary:

OF MUSIC A WHEEL

Music to keep for the night:
the quietly swimming air,
the sudden sweet cry
of a certain door

as there comes when a voice
takes up the sound
that the heart makes;
the taste of your hand—

and over it all
as under and among:
the wheeling word
giving throat to the song.

Rhyme opportunity is Basic? It is, I believe, proportionally no less limited than in ordinary English. Four of the twenty-two poems in "A Given

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Measure" (which I hope to issue in book form) use definite rhyme patterns. If you are the quatrain, or sonnet, type of poet, you will not find Basic easy to use; if you use ideas first, and then the form, Basic may be most rewarding. In "Of Music a Wheel," you will see that the rhymes are oblique, for which there is possibly greater opportunity than perfect rhymes in Basic. The poems run the gamut, from an almost surrealist "The Edge of Earth" (but nonetheless philosophically sound), through simple lyrics such as "Reward of Memory," "The Word Within," to such a poem as

SOCIETY! YOUR TRUE SERVANT

Secondly, and with no agreement
upon the quality of the firstly,
the committee has come to a decision
that nobody is necessary;
however, in order to make no error
possible,
it has kept the windows open,
and you may put your money
on the present company;
for myself, I will go
as I have gone before
ploughing the fertile spaces:
and I will see my profits
are respected in their own country.

* * *

REWARD OF MEMORY

Linen cloth,
the polish of silver
bursting into flower,
and in a minute
the taste of fruit
with the sun on the table
as, lifting the water glass
you say,
This is the color
of rain slipping through leaves,
and over the rhythm of growth
the leaf that will come:
for the reward of memory
is present in a word.

I give you the rain.

* * *

THE WORD WITHIN

Breathing so with arms outstretched,
eyes gripping from a force
far past all minding
of some other person's cry
with eyes facing the same desire,
you are the word within the wind
keeping him safe till he come back,
his arms suddenly folding about you
the voice of your word.

You may or may not agree that *far past* is more to the point than the non-Basic *beyond*, which I first used. In all cases, the titles are necessarily in Basic, thereby a fresh approach to titling is obtained.

Editorial opinion I have found mixed, usually arising from ignorance of Basic, its purpose or possibilities. So far, *The Christian Science Monitor* has purchased three of my poems.

The resources of Basic as a medium for poetry are untouched, and await the inquiring mind to develop them. I believe fully in the power of the given word, and feel that no limitations truly restrict creation.

The Shape God Wears

By Sara Henderson Hay

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee . . .
JOB 12, 7.

SO questioning, I was bold to dare
The sinewy tiger in his lair.
"Come forth, striped sir, make known to me
What God it was who fashioned thee."

Out leapt he like a muscled blaze,
Patterned in black and gold he was.
"Jehovah is his name," he cried,
"Tiger of Tigers, beryl-eyed,

"Flat flanked and sleek, His paws are curled
About the margins of the world.
He stalketh in His jungles grim—
I, even I, am like to Him!"

I sought that moving mountain side
The elephant, with ears fanned wide,
Treading the forests. "Sir, tell me
What manner of a God made thee?"

He swirled his trunk about an oak
And wrenched it up before he spoke,
Then answered in a trumpet blast,
"Old Super-Pachyderm, that vast

"Lord of the Elephants, the great
Trampler upon the worm's estate.
Crag-shouldered, terrible is He
Who of His substance fashioned me!"

I scaled the precipice, to seek
The eagle on his drafty peak.
"Tell me, O Gazer at the sun,
The nature of that Mighty One

Your Lord." He turned his crested head
And screamed athwart the wind and said
"Ancient of Eagles, wild and free,
Rider of tempests, He made me!

"His wing is stretched above the thunder,
His claws can rip the hills asunder.
His beak of two hooked knives is made—
Look on His likeness. Be afraid!"

Then turned I to the whorléd snail
Whose house is exquisite and frail,
Most deftly wrought. "Sir, I would know
What God it was Who shaped thee so."

Then cried he proudly to my face,
"Eternal Snail, God of my race.
The lightning is His silvery track,
He wears the world upon His back.

"He is most beautiful and wise,
He dwelleth in the moisty skies,
In the gray wall at heaven's rim,
And He has made me after Him!"

Then laughed I in superior mirth,
"Attend, ye creatures of the earth,
Misled, mistaken, all undone
And self-deceivers, every one.

"Hear ye, deluded beasts, while I
Explain the shape God wears, and why.
Self-evident the truth's displayed:
He is *my* Father, sirs," I said,
"And in my image He is made!"

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Letter from Cairo

By CAPT. GORDDEN LINK

IF the rain slant or the mind twist, if the heart be stricken,
If the eyes wince, or the blood leap, or the fever lines rise,
There in my own land, there where my people live . . .
That is my being. My breath catches and my pulses quicken
To cardiac thunder as I stand, staring into alien skies.

Thinking of home, I burst into a sweat of wanting and my tongue begins to cleave
To the roof of my mouth and damned but undammable tears rush down to burn
The nicked places on my cheek and chin. And while they stream,
I cling to the hope of some incredible escape,
Some magic day when somehow I shall suddenly return
There to my own land and walk the tall grasses and gape
Endlessly, drowning my thirsty, long remembering eyes,
Drowning my eyes in long remembered meadows,
To lave away cornea cracks that come from staring
Here in Mena-Giza where nothing is real, where all things only seem;
Where the eye retains the shape of endlessly sought for shadows;
Where the sun is no friend to signal day and hope, but dangerous, glaring
Menace to man. Something in me is baking hard and dry
As the mouth of the Sphinx. What matter history and tales
Of the Bible Land, what matter Cleopatra's barge and my billet on the Nile
(Villa 43 which doubtless housed Mark Antony) when I would give what's left of me to fly
Straight to Peachtree Road. Instead I press my dehydrated heart
Between the pages of this book I write and send it through the mails.

If the rain slant or the mind twist, if the heart be swollen,
If the eyes wince, or the pulse leap, or the stethoscope be still,
There in my own land, there where my people grew....
That is reality, from that may not be stolen
A single thought of mine. If nations rise and kill
Nation on nation a hundredfold and brew
Tempests that rock the world . . . my single thought shall dwell
Only on this: someday I shall return, though I be bone and mummy skin;
And folk who ask about the places I have been,
Who ask me all about what I have seen, why I have fought,
Will hear a curious thing. They will listen perhaps amazed for I shall tell
Proudly the brave and sounding words my father taught
And sing with pride my mother's songs. The sky
Over any town at home that I have known will be
Color for thinking; and all the phrases learned in class
Will rise to ultimate reality in terms of long
Familiar sights and sounds. . . ."Atlanta to the Sea."
"Remember the Alamo," "Fifty-four Forty or Fight"...
The names, the magic names of my incredible land will pass
In magic ways across my mind to make my heart lift strong
Remembering . . . The Ozarks, the Piedmonts, the Blue Ridge; the light
Sifting through Jersey smoke; the River at Nashville and Norwalk; the shore
At Miami, Virginia Beach, and Fire Island . . .
The green light that you have to follow when you take
The shuttle from Grand Central to Times Square; the door
Of Louey's Royal Cafe in Gaffney, smelling of ale;
And beer at the Crimson and Harvard Yard at night
And literary teas in Boston where they give you chocolate cake;
And Wacker Drive and Hollywood Boulevard and the Oregon Trail,
And open roads that you can follow to open places. . . .
These knew the pride of my glance, these are in *my* land;
They, and each cannonless border, each undefended lake,
They leave their mark on my brain, they leave their secret traces.

(How can a sudden catalogue explain
The way my heart is grown to flowering clamber-vine
That clutches ten thousand miles of streets and roads and beaches,
That clutches a hundred houses big with love or pain. . . .
The way my memory looks long away and reaches
A needle of ice down my proud straightened spine?)
If the rain slant, the mind twist, the heart be hungry,
If the pulse wane or the spade drop in final earthen token,
There in my own land, there where my people labor,
These have importance, these are the facts of life, these will make me angry
Or sad or lonely; these will bring hurt to be soothed by a kindly neighbor
Known all my life. And now that I have said this, now that I have spoken,
I rise refreshed; I stand and stare impertinent beneath this alien sun,
Knowing that miracles can happen, that someday I shall run
Once more through meadows, once more shall walk the breast-tall grasses,
Once more shall be concerned with little things, with all that passes,
There, there again where rain has more of wet and gleam,
The mind has more of memory and more of thinking,
The heart must swell up greater, the eyes open wider,
To take in all the space my fathers knew in dream. . . .
To comprehend a land as quick and free as winking,
As common and fine and clean as apple cider.

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The Irish Are Still Poets

PADRAIC COLUM

ONE thing can be said for present-day Irish poetry—that is if the anthology that reached me a while ago is representative*—it is entertaining. In a community I stayed in, the book was constantly borrowed and read aloud. "How good that is!" was the exclamation made with regard to one poem after another. Those who heard and read were well entertained.

The entertainment is in part due to the speech rhythms of most of the verse, words that are colloquial and at the same time unusual, a statement now and again that is witty or humorous. But these are surfaces and there is something deeper than that. Ultimately it is from the poets' attitude to poetry. For them, or for most of them, poetry is not a private meditation but a topic that has a group interest, and it comes, one can think, as a flourish to a heady conversation.

To show the quality of these poems I should quote one completely, but I cannot show it in that way because the characteristic poems are of considerable length. But I can illustrate the points I have been making by quoting lines from certain of these "Poems from Ireland." I shall begin with what I regard as a very notable poem, Frank O'Connor's "To Tomaus Costello at the Wars." It is a translation—I have no doubt it is as vigorous as the original—of a seventeenth-century Irish poem. We gather that a young wife is speaking to her husband, a commander in the war; she is complaining of the attention of one of his officers; then, without any marked transition, she is talking to the same officer who is none other than the famous poet, Tomaus Costello. She begins:

Here's pretty conduct, Hugh O'Rourke,
Great son of Brian, blossoming bough,
Noblest son of noble kin—
What do you say to Costello now?

Far to the Ulster wars he flies;
Some town he sacks—I am the town;
With some light love he charms the night—
Beguiling her, he brings me down.

Then she is addressing the one who is really in her mind, Costello:

And since I never shall be yours,
Your father's trade take up anew
And magnify the northern blood—
The light of poetry are you,
The stirring of the coals of love,
The voice by which old griefs are healed,
The mast of the rolling sail of war—
I may be yours, I shall not yield.

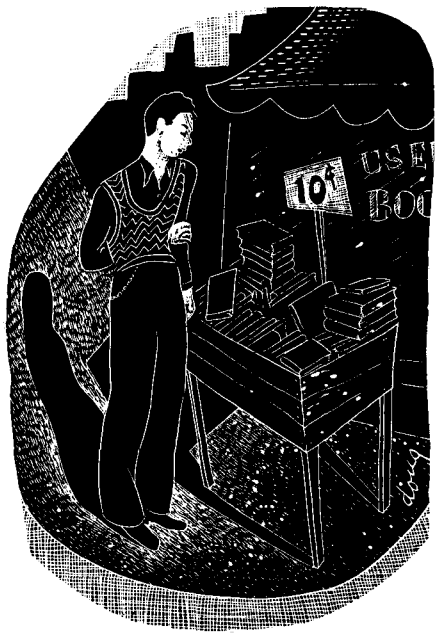
The same colloquialism is in Padraic Fallon's exploitation of Rafftery's poem to Mary Hynes, and, with that colloquialism, humor, and a surprising imagery. The original of Padraic Fallon's was eighteenth century, and is folk as contrasted with the aristocratic poem to Tomaus Costello. A poor wandering poet speaks:

That Sunday, on my oath, the rain
was a heavy overcoat
On a poor poet, and when the rain began
In fleeces of water to buckleap like a goat
I was only a walking penance reaching Kiltartan;
And there, so suddenly that my cold spine
Broke out in the arch of my back in a rainbow,
The woman surged out of the day with so much sunlight
I was nailed there like a scarecrow.

The end is as good as the beginning and has to be quoted:

Bless your poet then and let him go!
He'll never stack a haggard with his breath:
His thatch of words will not keep rain or snow
Out of the house, or keep death.
But Rafftery, rising, curses as he sees you
Stir the fire and wash delph,
That he was bred a poet whose selfish trade it is
To keep no beauty to himself.

The natural but surprising imagery, the speech rhythm, the humorous overtones are in the work of several other poets; they are in F. R. Higgins's "The Auction," and in that poem of Patrick Kavanagh's called "Glut in the Market" in which the horse he would sell and not even the tinkers would buy turns into Pegasus:



I begged, O make some offer—
A soul is a poor man's tragedy.
—He'll draw your dungiest cart, I said,
Show you short cuts to Mass,
Teach weather-lore, at night collect
Bad debts from poor men's grass.
And they would not.

Wittiness is in two nostalgic poems—in Robert O'Farachain's "The Western World" and in Francis MacManus's "Pattern of Saint Brendan." In the first, searching for memorials of J. M. Synge, "that meditative man," as W. B. Yeats called him, the poet finds that in the distant islands and far-off places that the dramatist of "The Playboy of the Western World" celebrated there is no memory of him left, but there is a memory of his contemporary, a murderer, "that violent man, James Lynchehaun," and concludes:

But Synge's reverberant name—
Like young men of Aran,
Like young girls of the Blaskets,
Took ship from the Western World
And never returned.

In "Pattern of Saint Brendan" the poet imagines the saint coming back from a transatlantic voyage (the outsider has to be informed that Saint Brendan was a medieval navigator) on his "pattern" or feast day when, for holiday music, there is "the bleat of melodeons" ending with "cries for a fight and calls for the sargeant:"

This is the evening, Brendan, O sailor,
stand off the mainland, backwater and glimmer,
though kirties be flittered and flesh be seasalted;
watch while this Ireland, a mirage, grows dimmer.
What have you come for? Why cease from faring
Through paradise islands and indigo water,
through vinland and bloomland and carribean glory?
Follow your chart with the smoky sea-monsters;
stay with the bright birds where music is pouring
balm for hurt souls, and Judas repentant
sits for one day on the rock in the ocean.
Turn from the ghostland, O great navigator;
lower the oars for a legend
of journeys; scan tossed
empty horizons from pole to equator
for Ireland, time-foundered, that Ireland has lost.

"Poems from Ireland" are not all of one kind; rather, they are a miscellany that ranges from the Anglo-Irish to a mode that reproduces the

* *Poems from Ireland. Edited by D. MacDonagh. Dublin:* The Irish Times.

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spirit of the Gaelic poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from poems that have nothing to say to Irish tradition to poems that are inseparable from it. Leaving out the work of the poets named or quoted already, I shall put the others in an order that is from Gaelic to non-Gaelic.

But I find within the intentional Gaelic pattern a good deal of variety. There is Donagh MacDonagh's poem that goes no further to Gaelicism than the lilt of the folk-song:

Going to Mass on Sunday my true love passed me by,
I knew her mind was altered by the rolling of her eye,
And when I stood in God's dark light my tongue could word no prayer,
Knowing my saint had fled and left her reliquary bare.

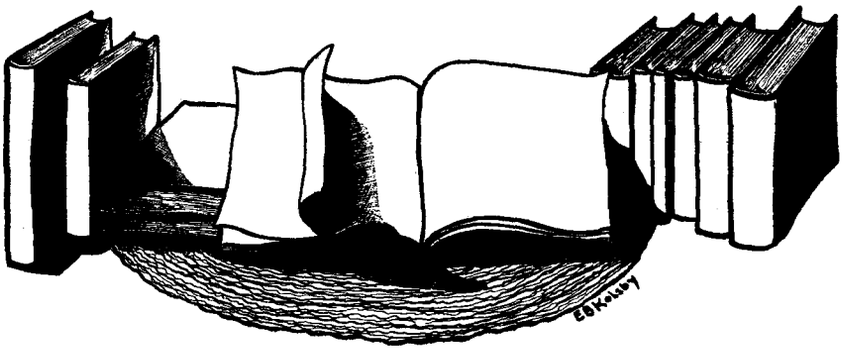
There is the medieval and the modern in poems muted by assonance that Austin Clarke and Patrick MacDonagh give us. This stanza is from Austin Clarke's "Wandering Men," a poem that has a visionary quality that I find memorable:

Among her women on the threshhold
Great Brigid gave us welcome.
She had concealed in colder veil
Too soon the flaming of her forehead
That drew our eyelids in the wood.
By shadowy arch she led the way,
She brought us to a lighted room
And served each at table.

And this stanza is from Patrick MacDonagh's "Over the Water."

Though noon will drowse in roses her young days carry coolness
Cropped from Meath's dawning acres or stolen from shadows
Under Dunboyne's tall hedges that lately shut the moon
From O more lucky lovers whom flittingdusk has gathered
In gentle couples. Here skies have scarcely room
To house the clouds of bombers, yet had I but my darling,
We'd mix our hate with pity for stripling airmen doomed
To their own strange damnation, and in a night of horror
Softly we'd lie together under a bomber's moon.

In Joseph Campbell's "Blanaid's Song" and "Butterfly in the Fields" there are a contrasting lightness and gracefulness that are also in the direct translations made by the poet whose pseudonym, Myles na gCopaleen, looks like a misprint. "Where Irish poetry in English is going in the future is not easy to guess," writes the editor, Donagh MacDonagh, in a foreword, and he goes on: "Every child who faces the microphone in a Gaelic quiz programme is able to give a thumbnail history of Gaelic poetry, to quote long passages from eighteenth-century poets, and to sing long and complicated Irish songs. . . . In these circumstances," he continues, "it seems reasonable to suppose that either a new native poetry will begin to develop, or, at the very latest, poetry written in English will show ever more signs of Gaelic influence."



The poems written without benefit of Gaelic have freshness, too. The poems that pleased me in this mode are by Seumas O'Sullivan, Lord Dunsany, Michael Scot, Maurice Craig, Rhoda Coghill, Louis MacNeice, George Hetherton. As examples I shall quote two that are not too long: the first is Seumas O'Sullivan's "The Artist's House:"

The house of the artist
Laughs through the trees,
Its gay windows shining
In their blue lattices,
And round it are meadow flowers
As high as heifer's knees,
And water reeds are springing there
All scented and lush,
With the fat gold bees garnering
As much as they can eat;
Without a hive to care for
Their free wings beat;
For why should they care
For the order and the shelf?
Any more than the artist,
Who can, an' it please himself,
Get all fragrance sweetness
In a turn of his brush.

The other is the badly entitled "Mise en Scène," by George Hetherton:

Marsiliun at Saragossa, Charles at the siege,
All Spain at hell, her castle broken, all,
Save only Saragossa, every wall
A crumbling monument and every liege
Dead or a Christian; speak, Blancandrin, speak.
Blancandrin speaking, every lord and baron
Nodding and silent, strokes his bearded cheek;
Clarin of Balaguet, Estamarin,
Malbien from over sea, all nod to hear
Blancandrin speaking for bright, lovely Spain.
Marsiliun is there, he lends his ear
Also to treachery; and Charlemagne
Plays chess at Cordres and sees the summer pass
And counts, perhaps, the days to Michaelmas.

"The collection is a cross section of the Irish poetry of the past ten years," the editor tells us. All the poems in the collection were published in one journal—the *Irish Times*. "In the ten years during which the *Irish Times* has published verse," he says, "few Irish poets have been unrepresented in its columns, and from the four hundred or so poems which have appeared I have had little difficulty in choosing poems typical of their authors."

What of the Ostriches?

By James Broughton

THERE are no available vacancies for headless hermits
Now that the earthquake moon has burst on the desert
And the roadbeds are hot with ruin and rust.
Who will go running again upon their plumed behinds?
There are no down payments obtainable
For snug sandy islands in this scalded over-boiled sea.

If you are considering other possible long necks
This is not even a good time for swans.
How serene can they float in an overturned tempest?
How clear are the air-lanes for geese over volcanoes?
Flamingos appear merely incongruous
After the sandstorm scorches the jungle.

And where will your defeathered friends find a furnishable room
In the molten dust after the eruption?
There are no more life-rafts for light housekeeping.
There are no permanent addresses with a view of the morass.
Perhaps here and there, if you come early and stand in line,
A shifting lava bed, transient, on a daily rate.

So maybe the ostrich has had his eye on a good thing:
Maybe the grave new world is the underworld.
Shall we then scrabble under the ruins
Down to the nether no-weather realms,
Bedfellow the worm, woo the mole,
And dwell in the dark among the decapitated ostrich heads?

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Poetic Taste and Tact

CONTEMPORARY SPANISH POETRY. Selections from Ten Poets. Translated by Eleanor Turnbull. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. 1945. 401 *pp.* $3.50.

THE ARAUCANIAD. A Version in English Poetry of Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga's "La Araucanad." By Charles Maxwell Lancaster and Paul Thomas Manchester. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. 1945. 326 *pp.* $4.50.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

THESE two books, taken together, provide a useful treatise on the art of translation. The virtues of Miss Turnbull's work, positive in any event, are underscored by the ambitious failures of "The Araucaniad"; and if one needs a measure with which to sound the depths of the latter "version in English poetry," he has only to turn to the least successful of the translations from the modern Spaniards. It will not do to plead that Miss Turnbull has triumphed in a slighter task; in spite of what Ercilla's translators have to say about the hideous difficulties of their project—one earlier translator went mad, it seems, and another committed suicide — their every page betrays them as lacking in all but two of the tools essential to their job: industry and a knowledge of Spanish.

Fundamentally, it is a question of literary taste and tact. Miss Turnbull senses with extraordinary accuracy the complex of meanings — sense, sound, tone—of the poem she is rendering. Instinctively aware that no translation can hope to mirror these qualities and still keep faith with the original, she sensibly contents herself with retaining as much as possible of the imagery, the intellectual content. The other beauties are lost, though the refinement of her phrasing and the inventive grace of her diction preserve her from what the Ercilla impresarios call "a *pot-pourri* of literal drivel neither English nor Spanish." These gentlemen, however, would have us believe that the proper dress for a swaggering epic of the Golden Age is a jog-trot parody of the meter of "Hiawatha," "which like a splashing waterfall sings in the ears of America the immemorial romance of the Indian." That is what they say, and that is the way they say it.

The ten Spanish poets—Moreno Villa, Salinas, Jorge Guillén, Diego, Garcîa Lorca, Alberti, Prados, Aleixandre, Cernuda, and Altolaguirre—are by no means all that Miss Turnbull might have included in a representative collection, but they do give an excellent idea of the art that came into its own in the five brief years of the republic and survived as a fighting force during the Civil War and the exile which followed. Garcîa Lorca died before the Fascist guns almost as soon as the rebellion broke out; and of the entire group, only Gerardo Diego—by no means the least gifted—chose Franco and betrayal. Politics is not poetry; but as I have remarked elsewhere, it is a pity that Miss Turnbull's selection reflects scarcely a trace of the Spanish agony: a pity the more strange because these very poets were so much involved in it and wrote about

it so movingly. Pedro Salinas's prefatory "Personal Reminiscences of the Poets," charming though it is, is equally reticent. But while I cannot account for this, and personally deplore it, the more useful fact remains that Miss Turnbull has given us a generous corpus of important poetry in the original language with translations more than adequate on the opposite pages.

"La Araucana" celebrates the Spanish conquest of an Indian tribe in central Chile—or, rather, it celebrates the tribe's resistance to conquest, since Ercilla, himself one of the conquistadores, was so enchanted by the valor of his quarry that his poem is really their epic. As a poem, it is one of those great sprawling awkward national monuments—every language has them: the kind of thing that you must read if you are a scholar, that you feel you must read if you are a patriot, but that only the itching of pedantry or the enthusiasm of patriotism could ever mistake for poetry. Its chief characteristics are rodomontade and gore: the nearest thing to it that I know in English is the Pyrrhus speech in "Hamlet." I have little doubt that it would be a good thing to have a version of it in English: the historical escapades of our elders are edifying, and we can't have too much source material on the American Indian. But I have no doubts at all about the utility of "The Araucaniad." I select a strophe, wholly at random:

When this vile vituperation
Ended, Rengo, boiling over,
Waiting not for license, blustered:
"Bring him on! I'm firm and ready.
Your display of silly tantrums
Sends no shivers through my marrow.
Arms will speak and render verdict,
Not a bully's blathering blabber."

That is the tone of the whole.

"Lower Sails!" the seamen shouted.
"Pull the mainmast down, the foresail!"
And the passengers re-echoed
This request . . .

This request! Parody could be no more deadly.

And there is page after page of it, a relentless, roaring, tasteless gallop of ugly lines and ragbag diction. Whatever "Hiawatha's" faults, and it is not my favorite poem, it never plashed in the ears of America like this. "The authors," says the preface, "have sought to capture the spirit, the poetic vigor, and the beauty of imagery of the soldier-poet's creation, rather than to ladle out for pedantic critics a *pot-pourri* of literal drivel neither English nor Spanish, neither the penny jewel of jingling verse, nor the infecund pebble of polished prose." I do not know how my fellow pedantic critics feel about it; but in nominating this specimen for Sentence of the Year I should like to record my conviction that writers who preludize like this are done for before they begin.

Welcome

By Theodore Maynard

TO lonely and aloof
Men I offer a roof
Against the icy rain
Of their remorseless pain,
For I have built it first
When my own weather was worst.

If women choose to stay
Outside, of course they may—
That is their own affair;
Though they are free to share
Whatever I have to give
To friend a fugitive:

A mind that all day chimes
With bronze or silver rhymes,
In which flash images
Like the eternal seas
That change as flickering flame,
And yet remain the same.

The Fair may well prefer—
Although in this they err—
Some soft nook, downy-warm,
As shelter from the storm
Than this for Adam's clay.
If so, let them away!—
I have no more to say.

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They Have Blown the Trumpet

By FLORENCE CONVERSE

IT happened in New Mexico
According to plan:
An angel took a censer and filled it with the fire of the altar
And cast it into the earth:
And there were voices
And thunderings
And lightnings,
And an earthquake.
And I was knocked flat
And everybody was knocked flat,
And we haven't got up yet.

We hung the ripe fruit of the Tree of Knowledge
From a specially constructed steel tower,
Miles away from everywhere else
In New Mexico.
Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace
And there shall be none.
And the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge
Being dead ripe
Exploded and scattered its seeds of death
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,
And there was a sound as of a Trumpet
Blasting the Earth
And the waters under the Earth,
And cracking the vault of Heaven.
And I bethought me how an angel
Swore by him that liveth forever,
That there should be time no longer.
For the sound of the Trumpet,
Searching us,
Was timeless.

And the synthetic branch of the Tree of Knowledge,
From which we had suspended the fruit of the Tree,
Disappeared *in toto.*
That strong tower of steel
Vaporized at the sound of the Trumpet:
Vaporized, evaporated, vanished away.
That delicately adjusted steel gadget
—A vesture outworn—
Dissolved into vapor
And was sucked into the rarefied air
Of New Mexico.

And we beheld as in a vision
The dissolution of Empire
—A garment riddled with moth,—
Lo, Preparedness and Universal Conscription,
Armaments and National Defense,
Blown through a hole in the air.
Lo, the checkbook, the safety deposit box, the New York Stock Exchange,
Those gadgets indispensable to Finance,
Not even liquidated,—just vaporized,—
Vestures outworn.
Lo, the Poet, barren of rhythm and stripped
Of his figures of speech.
Not one figleaf,—no; not one.
And all of us uneasy Christians
Shifting our eyes,
Trying not to look on our uncovered shame.
O Father Adam,
Your nakedness is as nothing, as nothing,
To our nakedness.

There were cherubims in New Mexico;
And the flaming sword turned everyway at once,
To keep the way of the Tree of Life,
—Every baffling way at once,—
Blinding us with the blaze of it,
So we lay prone in the spirit,
Our eyes seared by the sword blade,
And the voice of the Trumpet excoriating our ears,
Which is still our predicament.

God is Love, we say,
In an effluvium of sentiment.

And this Judgment is visited upon us
By Love?
This shadow, this dark horror, this relentless test,
Beneath which we must go softly
All our days,
Is Love's destiny for us?
This little capsule crammed with death and destruction,
Comes to us from the healing hand of love?

Seeing then that all those things shall be dissolved,
What manner of persons ought we to be
In all holy conversation and godliness?

There is no attempt to appeal our case.
No one claims immunity.
Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?
No one makes excuse.
No voice is lifted in defense
Against this Judgment.
We take it lying down.

But there is interminable fumbling
And mumbling and bumbling
With that test word, Peace.
O spirit are you ready? O flesh are you strong?
Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.
For how shall we be peacemakers,
Who will not make our peace with Love?
And how shall we say to the cherubims
Blocking the way to the Tree of Life:
Put up your sword,—
If we do not the commandments of Love?
Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

For once again, Love, the Very God,
Has delivered Himself into our treacherous hands.

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The Devil in the Suburbs

MEMOIRS OF HECATE COUNTY. By Edmund Wilson. New York: Doubleday and Co. 1946. 338 *pp.* $2.50.

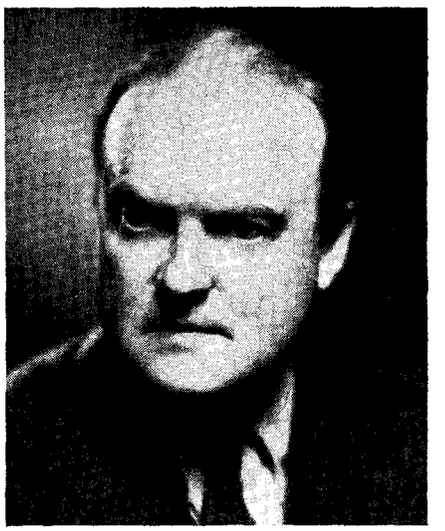
Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

WHEN the man who is the sharpest and most readable literary critic of our time produces a long work of fiction he is laying himself wide open to attack. He who has assaulted so many fly-blown reputations and flattened so many writers who were hailed as budding geniuses may expect to find himself in the direful position of the armed knight of old who was pushed off his horse and lay helpless on his back where the common soldier might have a go at him. In this book he is attacking the suburban middle class whom the depression left so benighted and lost during the early thirties. This is a subject on which Mr. Wilson has touched in his book, "The American Jitters, the Year of Slump," 1931, and to which he returned four years later during his short love affair with Communism, in his "Travels in Two Democracies." He has an agile mind which embraces economics and literature with equal fluency.

His protagonist is an unmarried middle-aged dilettante who is trying to prove something by attempting to place art and economics in the same bed. But the reader will be more interested in his shrewd observation of the distraught lives about him rather than in his own opinions; and distraught they certainly are, with a touch of the diabolic, that is somehow or other not quite convincing, that is Mr. Wilson's own contribution. The little devils of hell can be caught now and then looking out of the eyes or peering over the shoulders of his characters. Most imaginative and over-read men may have these moments after a few post-prandial drinks when an ordinary room or a plainly neurotic woman seem to reveal a glimpse of the dark pit.

"Memoirs of Hecate County" is named after the triple-headed goddess of midnight and black magic, but you will have to plow through a great many pages before you feel that genuine *frisson* up and down your back which is produced by some of his scenes. The three short novels which form the greater part of the book are prefaced by three satirical sketches which are variously interesting, if not absorbing. The best of them is perhaps "Glimpses of Wilbur Flick," a study of a frustrated rich man who finds in sleight-of-hand and parlor magic an excuse for his otherwise useless life, interspersed with the kind of hairbrained discussions of economics and technocracy which swept over young radicals and older men who had any money at all in those bad old days before prosperity swept over us again via the Second World War. It might be said that the book would be less confusing to the ordinary reader if it had contained only the short novels which are to a considerable extent related and which are penetrated by Mr. Wilson's diabolic undertones. Without these sketches, "Memoirs of Hecate County" would be over a hundred thousand words long and that ought to be long enough for anyone, though Mr. Wilson describes his innumerable characters and the effect they have on him with determined brilliance and clairvoyance. In the last long novel, "Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn at Home," it is indeed rewarding to come across this horrendous conception while the hero is kissing a responsive lady, "She seemed to me to be as voracious and hot as I had ever known her before . . . her lips parted in such a way as to show great long bare-gummed teeth that stuck out and yet curved back like tusks and that seemed almost too large to be contained in her mouth. She looked like a dog panting when you take it out for a drive. . . . I pounded kisses against it, etc., etc."

But a greater reward for the curious can be found in the longest of these novels, "The Princess with the Golden Hair," in which there are embedded some of the most frankly erotic passages that can be found in the modern writing that need not be sold under the counter. These amorous episodes, vaguely reminiscent of Frank Harris's autobiography, will doubtless be the subject of controversy for some time to come. They are the result of the hero's reminiscences of his adventures among women about 1920 when he had gone on a tour of the art galleries abroad to live in New York, to walk in the evenings along Fourteenth Street and observe "the big-hipped, cat-faced women whose photographs were shown as lures in front of the burlesque theatres." These bare-skinned descriptions of love affairs, with nothing omitted, are, one might say, not in the least pornographic, if one accepts that word in any adult and intelligent way, but they are not especially revealing of anything except the flesh of the human animal and, oddly enough, the hero in his middle age seems somewhat priggish in his recollections of them from his salad days. But a great deal of what is fine and accurate writing and observation in "Memoirs of Hecate County" may be swept away in the minds of future readers by the notoriety that these scenes will evoke. We have managed to keep at bay the literary censors and the keyhole peepers who insist that books should not be printed that their little Lucy should not read. It would be unfortunate and ironic if our foremost literary critic should rouse these dogs to bay at literature again.



—*Pinchot*

Edmund Wilson, "the sharpest and most readable literary critic of our time . . . is laying himself wide open to attack."

As a social and literary critic, Mr. Wilson's opinions are founded on an almost puritanical morality, as you will see if you read "Axel's Castle." He is always clear and direct and absorbing even when he has taken the privilege of a free man to change his mind. But what has become, in this confusing and cynical work of fiction, of the mind that has conceived his earlier books? Has the devil at work in the suburbs darkened Mr. Wilson's memories of the Lost Generation so that many of his characters, who can sometimes be labeled with living names, seem distorted and intermingled like the figures in a nightmare?

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 625)

T. DE QUINCEY:
OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Over every grave, even though tenanted by guilt and shame, the human heart, when circumstantially made acquainted with its silent records of suffering or temptation, yearns in love or in forgiveness to breathe a solemn Requiescat.

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Dreiser as Master Craftsman

THE BULWARK. By Theodore Dreiser. New York: Doubleday & Company. 1946. 337 *pp.* $2.75.

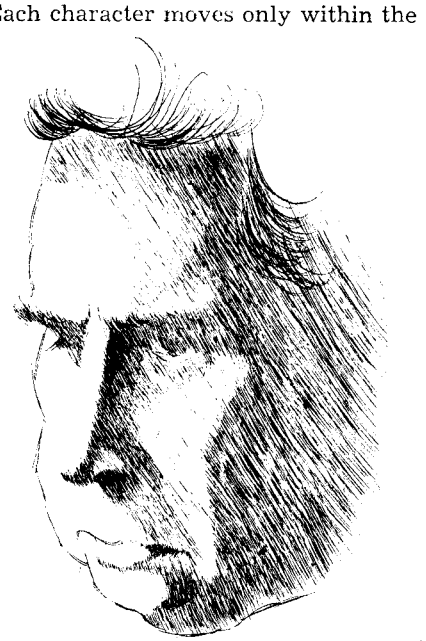
Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER

THIS is the first of two novels which Dreiser completed and put to press just before he died. Both were conceived and probably partly written thirty or more years ago. The third volume of the Cowperwood trilogy is yet to appear. "The Bulwark," a study of a Philadelphia Quaker family at the close of the last century, was first announced in 1916. It is possible, however, that the reception of "The Genius" one year earlier discouraged the completion of another major work at that time, for, until "An American Tragedy" in 1925, Dreiser gave to the world only short stories, essays, plays, and autobiography.

"The Bulwark" is a major novel, a substantial piece of work, well conceived and carefully executed, representing its author in his full creative power. If it may also be taken as a last will and testament, it presents an interesting biographical problem, for here is an answer in faith to the spiritual doubt of his best work. Another possible reason for its delay is that Dreiser at the age of forty-six was not yet ready for the affirmation which seemed logical to him at seventy-four. Perhaps it took him thus long to face his own challenge.

"The Bulwark" is the life story of Solon Barnes and of his family from the time when, at the age of ten, he left with his parents the small town of his birth, to his death in the now old family home in New Jersey not far from Trenton, his grown children about him. It is a quiet and solemn story, told with an almost heavy sincerity and an economy of incident. The moral issue which confronts Solon throughout is always before the reader. The characters move, as Dreiser characters must, through the shaping actions of their lives helpless in the hands of a fate beyond their control, but "The Bulwark" is unique among Dreiser novels in that the moral issue and the forces of which it is composed are clearly defined and never for a moment forgotten. Never is the reader lost in mere action; always he is weighing and evaluating the central problem: Does the simple way of the Friends provide a philosophy capable of dealing with the forces which so mangled the lives of Carrie and Jennie and Frank Cowperwood, and later Clyde Griffith? Had Solon the answer?

Emphasis on ideology involves a sacrifice in fictional vividness. When a novelist, in the manner of a Hawthorne, is interested rather in what his characters stand for than in what they are, there is an inevitable loss of the sense of reality. They become typed to the point of losing much of their actuality. The line between realism and allegory is crossed, and the characters are themselves controlled instead of controlling the action. This happens to Solon, and it happens even more so to Benecia his wife, and to his five children, their friends, business associates, and relatives. Each character moves only within the part in the ideological pattern assigned to him. Even Stewart and Etta, the youngest and most wayward of the children, lack the authenticity of Jennie Gerhardt and Clyde Griffith, although the course of their lives is closely drawn to the Dreiser formula of Sex and Wealth. The old stories are here repeated, but compressed so that their bearing upon Solon's problem alone is emphasized. Yet even minor characters, within these limitations, have a firmness of outline and a solidity which is Dreiser's greatest achievement always. There is nothing shadowy about his allegory; it is made of the stuff of life—and his people live.



– *Arthur D'Amato*

Theodore Dreiser's "The Bulwark" "may be taken as a last will and testament . . . an answer in faith to the spiritual doubt of his best work."

The sacrifice of full character development is more than repaid in firmness of texture, a quality not so certain in Dreiser's work. This is the most solidly built of all his novels, in plot and ideology. The long pages of minutiae which stretch out the slim plots of his other works are here severely cut to essentials, and he is able to tell a much longer and more involved story than is usual with him, in half the space. And the uncertainty of direction which spoiled "The Genius" is no longer present. This is the work of a master craftsman who knows what he wishes to say and exactly how much writing is necessary to its saying.

For Quakers, the central issue of this story will have a profound and searching meaning; and for those others who have found in the way of the Quakers in wartime a hope and a promise, it will serve as a fair and non-partisan examination of their faith. For Solon's guidance by the Inner Light is constant if not always perfect. He falls into the error of substituting the dicta of "The Book of Discipline" for an ever fresh searching on his own part. He is too much Solon, the lawgiver; too little the lover of men. He fails with his children because his conviction is too rigid for a world in change; and he fails in his profession as banker because he listens to the false logic of his elder friend, Justus Wallin, that property may be acquired if administered in justice. The sense of guilt which pursues him through life is not laid aside until sorrow has taught its lesson. That in the end he is still able to distil the doctrine of love from his religious heritage makes it possible for him to die in peace.

In thus reconciling God with nature, Dreiser has not rejected the brutality of his own naturalism, but he endows Solon finally with a way of life which, for him at least, gives meaning if not always clear direction to the conflict in the natural world. Was this Dreiser's deathbed confession? Had the mysticism which always colored his dogged acceptance of the ugly with the beautiful finally taken a form and a control in religious awakening? His biographers must decide.

The Critic

By Sara Van Alstyne Allen

SAY some charitable thing.
Dismiss him then
To the little world of men.
Shape your thin pencil to the page
Wherein he compassed his own age.

Close the new book and go to bed,
Remembering nothing that he said.
But in the night his hopes will come—
One at your head, one at your feet—
One with quiet fingers at your throat,
As you remember what he wrote!

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The People Interview Mrs. Roosevelt

FOR more than four years Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt has been answering questions on every conceivable subject in her department in The Ladies' Home Journal. *Selected questions and answers from this department make up two-thirds of the contents of "If You Ask Me," which is reviewed by W. L. White on the opposite page. The questions and answers on this page are taken from this second portion of the book.*

Who writes your column? What is your system for getting so much other writing done, along with your many activities?

I write my column myself; at least I dictate it to Miss Thompson, who takes it directly on the typewriter, and then I correct it and she makes the final copy and sends it to the syndicate by wire.

As far as my other writing goes, I nearly always dictate it to Miss Thompson and then correct it; sometimes a good many drafts have to be typed before it is in final shape. I use whatever spare time I can find for doing this writing and I try not to be idle much of the time.

Is there anything you have always longed to do, and never quite gotten around to?

I have always wanted to try to write fiction, but I have never had the time.

Have you ever said to yourself, "If only I were a man?" Or are you quite content with being a woman?

No, I have never wanted to be a man. I have often wanted to be more effective as a woman, but I have never felt that trousers would do the trick!

Do you consider a fur coat—not sable, mink, or ermine—a luxury or a necessity?

Any fur coat I consider a luxury.

How can I convince my mother that twelve years old is not too young to have dates?

I doubt very much if you can. I have a feeling that only a very unwise mother would consider that a girl of twelve should have dates. You are still a child and should have a good time as a child and stop thinking or wishing that you could grow up before your time. You will have a much better time in the future if you do not try to grow up too quickly.

Have you any good friends who are Republicans?

I hope so.

What do you think of the increasing tendency of today's novelists to use so many "four-letter words" not spoken in polite society?

I did not know there were any words left that were not spoken in polite society.

Did your husband notice a new dress or hat when you wore one, or was he like so many other men who never even see a wife's new clothes?

I think my husband was too preoccupied, usually, to notice my clothes, but sometimes he would suddenly look up and say he liked something I had been wearing for two or three years!

What was the most amusing occurrence in the White House while you were there?

I cannot think of any except, perhaps, when five hundred people were expected at a reception, and only four came, and we found later that the invitations had never been issued. It was not only amusing, but it gave me some unexpected extra time, which is always welcome.

What quality in your husband do you think was most responsible for his success?

His patience and his ability to look at things historically. By that I mean that his vision was not limited by the immediate situation, but he was able to see the background and the future of whatever was under consideration. When he made a decision he could patiently wait for the outcome; and if it was wrong or partially wrong, he had the patience to begin again.

What is your favorite poem?

Stephen Vincent Benét's "John Brown's Body." It is a little hard, though, to say, because I read a great deal of poetry, and when I reread some of my old favorites, I decide that I like them better than my newer ones. If you were to ask me tomorrow, therefore, I might have just reread Milton's sonnet "On His Blindness" and have decided that is my favorite for the moment!

What is your greatest fear?

My greatest fear has always been that I would be afraid—afraid physically or mentally or morally—and allow myself to be influenced by fear instead of by my honest convictions.

Most little girls seem to want to be actresses. Do you remember—or would you be willing to tell—what was your earliest ambition?

I do not know that most little girls want to be actresses. I think all little girls are actresses, but then so are all little boys. Every child I have ever known "imagined" his way through his early life. My earliest ambition was to be a nurse.

Are you afraid of mice?

I do not like them, but I do not shriek when I see one.

Do you approve of women smoking on the street?

I am old-fashioned enough not to like the looks of a woman smoking on the street, but I realize this is purely an old-fashioned prejudice.

Are you ever going to continue your autobiography which ended with your husband's election in 1932?

My autobiography ended with Governor Smith's first campaign for nomination for the presidency, in 1924. I fully intend to go on with my autobiography when I can find the time, but I wouldn't want to have it published for some years to come.

Do you ever lose your temper?

Occasionally, but not in the way one usually thinks of as losing one's temper. I become cold and silent, and I regret to say that my children recognize this and say, "Look out, ma's mad."

Bette Davis's pet economy is using the same bobby pins several years. What is yours?

Saving string.

Being a hairdresser, it has often puzzled me why a modern woman, such as you, has never changed her hair style. Do you have any particular reason for not having a new hairdo?

I have changed my hair style several times, perhaps not often enough. In any case, when you reach my age, if you can find anything which is moderately becoming, it is better to leave it alone and care less about being in the fashion and more about being inconspicuous!

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A Great Lady: Self Portrait

IF YOU ASK ME. By Eleanor Roosevelt. New York: Appleton-Century Co. 1946. 156 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by W. L. WHITE

IT should first be explained that the portrait was unintentional, and then be added that clearly Mrs. Roosevelt did not plan this to be an important work. The book falls into two parts. In the first and briefer section her publishers have invited various real and pseudo celebrities to prod her with questions. In a good many of these, the celebrities clearly have personal axes to grind, and are in effect asking her to pat them on the back for the nobility and high purpose of the various enterprises in which they are engaged; this she does when it can be done honestly, and always with sweetness and tact.

It is, however, only when she is finished with these great and selfless minds that the fun really begins, for then her publishers drop the velvet rope to admit the peanut gallery and in the remainder of the book Mrs. Roosevelt answers anonymous questions put by members of the common run of mankind who deeply trust her, and who clearly are in hopes that her answers may clear up their various befuddlements.

It is true, of course, that a number verge upon the footling. Pressed, she graciously divulges her favorite flower, color, and perfume. Occasionally she lapses into an understandable reticence when her privacy is invaded by queries as to what exactly the late President said when he proposed, or as to how she pronounces "tomato."

Yet she can preserve a courtly dignity even when dodging really hot potatoes, as for instance when one eager heart asks for her "honest opinion of Westbrook Pegler" and in Mrs. Roosevelt's reply there is just a soupçon of that chill sweetness of a vanilla ice cream cone: she has met Mr. Pegler only twice, "and without knowing him better I do not feel justified in having any opinion."

Yet her real relationship to the American people is best typified by the fact that all the feeble folk—the lame, the halt, the blind, the persecuted and despised of men, the various minorities laboring under discrimination—all of these come to her with their troubles as children to a mother, knowing that they will get, not soft soap, but real compassion and a truly helpful wisdom that comes only from the deep earnestness of her tender heart.

When a distinguished Negro educator asks, "What attitudes and actions now taken by Negroes do you now regard as unwise?", she cites "the type of inflammatory and irresponsible articles which one sometimes reads in the Negro press," and adds that "I have been told that in crowds some Negroes jostle and push their neighbors on purpose, just for the sake of feeling superior," which she deplores "because good manners and consideration for others are important to all human relations, and no one can afford to ignore them."

And when a Jew asks her substantially the same question in regard

Eleanor Roosevelt believes a President most needs "an understanding heart."

to anti-Semitism, she advises Jews to "go about their own lives, doing things they have always done, but trying not to be too aggressive or too ingratiating or too flattering to people who they suspect are sizing them up," and, in explaining her use here of the word "aggressive," points out that "I think all of us should watch ourselves for the habit of pushing our interests until other people are either wearied or annoyed by our apparent neglect of their interests."

There is finally the unreconstructed Confederate who, from the Deep South, demands to know if she would vote for a Negro for President. Now this is the kind of spiny cactus which would keep a platform committee of either party in its shirt sleeves up until four o'clock, sweating, swearing, revising phrases, and groping for weasel words.

By contrast, Mrs. Roosevelt, who has been described by her frustrated admirer Westbrook Pegler as one of the most astute politicians of our times, answers it effortlessly. She feels that candidates should be considered, not on the basis of "creed or color, but on his or her qualifications for the job," and that "no one should be considered who could not command the support of a majority of the people of the country, because he could not be constructive."

Lacking the politician's cunning, she is able to achieve a far better result because she draws on her deep common sense and her kindliness.

Has the book faults? Occasional and unimportant ones. When someone asks her why Russia's land grabs in Poland are any better than Germany's, she justifies them in part by saying that "Russia had already gone into a part of Poland where there are a great many Slavs." In point of hard fact, both Poles and Russians are only divisions of the great Slav race.

She also explains that "originally Communism was intended as a world revolution for all oppressed peoples. That theory is abandoned today," and there are other evidences that she believes that under the glittering tunic of Marshalissimo Stalin there beats the heart of a Girl Scout.

Yet these very faults became virtues when she went to London to the UNO meeting and won the surprised plaudits of her stuffier colleagues for her skill in standing up to the Soviets. But again there was no studied cunning in her attitude. She simply moved in as a super-mother, presiding over a large family of often noisy, sometimes unruly, but basically good-hearted boys, who now and then need firmly to be put in their places and of whom, in London, the prototype of Elliot was Mr. Vishinsky.

And so I close with the shrewd question put her by Hans Kaltenborn, who wanted to know which, in her opinion, were more essential in a President: the qualities of a politician or those of an administrator. A President needed both, she answered, but far more than these he needed "an understanding heart."

It is perfectly mirrored in this book, and it is this great heart which will carry the great lady, in the coming decade, to far wider fields of public usefulness, amid the fervid plaudits of this reviewer.

Ararat

By Witter Bynner

SLEEP close to me tonight and keep
me sane . . .
That other world has been in vain,
in vain;
But if this ark with animals within
We still can land, we shall have outsailed sin.

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All the Isms of Russia

THE GREAT RETREAT. The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia. By Nicholas S. Timasheff. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. 1946. 462 pp. $5.

Reviewed by LOUIS FISCHER

NICHOLAS S. TIMASHEFF was born in St. Petersburg, the capital of Czarist Russia, in 1886. Later he taught jurisprudence in St. Petersburg. He left Russia in 1921. Now he teaches at Fordham University.

His book shows painstaking care and research. The author is erudite. Much of the material he presents is not otherwise available in English. The book reads a bit like a textbook. It is not as good as Laserson's recent "Russia and the Western World," but, like it, "The Great Retreat" deals with the tremendous changes which have taken place inside the Soviet Union these last ten or twelve years which are usually ignored by most ignorant Americans who nevertheless talk glibly about Russia as though it were still the Russia of 1935.

Professor Timasheff's main thesis is this: Czarism was not stagnant. Much progress was made under the absolute monarchy. (I reject this completely; it is like the argument that much progress has been made in India under the British. Nevertheless, India is and Czarist Russia was an unhappy, underdeveloped, unfree, retarded country.) According to the professor, "the Communist revolution was a shock inflicted on a rapidly advancing society and compelling it to depart from its historical ways . . . the Communist experiment was a violent disruption of continuity, a conflict between a Utopian idea and historical tradition. . . ."

Now, Russia has gone nationalist. "In turning nationalist once more," writes Timasheff, "Russia proved that in the very depths of her national soul she never had abandoned her historical way, which on the surface seemed lost in 1917."

So Russia is herself again, according to the Russian nationalist author, and will stay that way. This new nationalism, he thinks, is not imperialism.

Many authorities on Russia will disagree. He will meet sharp dissent from these highgrade students of Soviet affairs—Nicolaievsky, Dallin, and Abramovitch—who write regularly in that dynamic, unorthodox New York weekly, *The New Leader;* they believe Stalin's Russian nationalism is a passing phase; is, indeed, already passing and making way for Communist imperialism.

Nicholas S. Timasheff's "book one can read with profit while disagreeing with [its] fundamental assumptions."

I think Stalin is too brilliant and shrewd to limit himself to one political weapon: the new Kremlin-sponsored nationalism is deeply rooted. So is state capitalism, or statism, the authoritarian state. The Soviet authorities will use nationalism, socialism, the church, and the personal glorification of Stalin to win public support at home. Abroad they will use Pan-Slavism where it works, anti-imperialism where that would be effective, Greek Orthodox priests, Moslem mullahs, and Armenian churchmen where they can spread Russia's power, and Communism where it has an appeal. Timasheff contends that Stalin is Peter the Great. The *New Leader* group argues that Stalin is and always was the Bolshevik. I see no conflict.

Irrespective of this controversy, however, Professor Timasheff's book is welcome for the raw material it contains. All Communists and fellow-travelers should read it for the quotes from Soviet sources which they usually do not see. If they are afraid of being contaminated by Timasheff they can go through the book and pick out only the quotes and skip the comments. Of course, the Soviet quotes may contaminate them too. Perhaps, on second thought, it is better for them not to read it at all. Faith is more comforting than facts.

Professor Timasheff's chapters on the changes which took place during the Great Retreat in the Kremlin's policies towards art, literature, the church, the family, morals, education, and economic theory are fascinating. This is a book which one can read with profit while disagreeing, as I do, with the fundamental assumptions of the author.

Kilroy

By Howard Griffin

O KILROY
Voice in the wind, faintly answering Kilroy, Kilroy
You descended into Hell
And then you died
With a .30 M1 called "Dream Girl"
In your hands,
You rose from the dead
And ascended into Heaven;
You are the Trinc we thought of and made real,
The Giant of ourselves, the epic wish,
Invulnerable and vast—
Dogface; ciphered identity—
Maybe you—or the fellow in the torn fatigues
—or maybe me—
A sacred Name—
That sounds further than the great horn
At which the birds fell dead,
What act too low to be attributed
To you?
To rise to this high point,
A symbol of Desire,
Scribbled on shower-walls,
A byword in the *machiais* of Honshu,
Written in fire across the swastikas—
Born of that martial preference
For plaques, gilt lettering and urns.

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USN, USNR, and A Rousing Yarn

BATTLE REPORT (Vol. 2): THE ATLANTIC WAR, From the Neutrality Patrol to the Crossing of the Rhine. Prepared from official sources by Commander Walter Karig, USNR, with Lieutenant Earl Burton, USNR, and Lieutenant Stephen L. Freeland, USNR. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 1945. 558 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by RON SCHILLER

THIS "Battle Report: The Atlantic War" is a superb book. It is easily the best account that has yet appeared of the Navy's war in the Atlantic and its adjacent seas. It is *not,* however, to be accepted as a true and literal account of the battles and campaigns the Navy fought. It is an "official" history. This lends great strength to its documentation, great weakness to its point of view. For instance, every character mentioned in the book is a brave and resourceful man. There is never a hint of a single fool or coward, although there were a considerable number of them, and often their actions were as important to the course of a battle as those of the heroes.

Most of the battles and campaigns in this book go according to plan. Where they don't, the authors find good and sufficient reason for the hitch, then explain the tactics employed to overcome the difficulties. Tolstoy's thesis that war is a series of haphazard and fortuitous events overlaid on a basic strategical plan is especially true of naval warfare. Yet one looks in vain for some acknowledgment of the utter, sometimes hopeless, confusion that attended some of the amphibious and naval engagements. We won most of our battles because the enemy was in an equal or worse state of confusion.

Another of the book's annoying "official" characteristics is the unflagging zeal with which it breaks into a racing narrative to mention the full names and ranks of all flag and commanding officers attached to the task forces, squadrons, or ships engaged. Nor does it ever fail to note whether the officers or men are USN or USNR, regular or reserve. It is puzzling to know why all this information, important as it is for reference, could not have been relegated to footnotes so as not to impede the smooth flow of the narrative.

But, once noted, these objections pale in view of the magnificent feat of editing performed by Commander (now Captain) Karig and his associates. Through a mass of official documents and battle reports, so voluminous that they could be measured by the carload, the authors have succeeded in tracing an eloquent narrative. The story is imaginative, very well written, and beautifully balanced between the great and minute events of battle in a way that few other histories of war have been able to achieve. In a council room ashore or an admiral's cabin afloat the stage is set for a battle or an amphibious landing. Then the authors conscientiously leave the bridge to wander down into the engine rooms, onto the decks of the little amphibs, or onto the beaches where unknown men did the dirty work and fought and died. As much attention is devoted to the careers and comments of these men as to those of the brass hats. Nor do the authors ever lose their sense of humor. Where they could have garnered the hoard of comment and funny incidents that spice the book throughout is a mystery. Such things do not appear in the formal pages of battle reports. But there they are, some of them imperishable.

Absorbing stories, never before told outside of the wardrooms and fo'c'sles, are narrated in this book for the first time in detail. Choice yarns: the Murmansk run, certainly the bloodiest sea-saga of the war; how the old carrier *Wasp* saved Malta with a cargo of land-based Spitfires; the Greenland operations, where men were kept alive for months by supplies dropped by parachute and rescued on the ice by seaplanes that used their floats as skis; the artificial harbors built from Hatteras to Florida to protect our merchant shipping at night; the surrender on the high seas of the U-505 to an American flattop; the savage, secret Battle of the Bay of Biscay between patrol bombers and U-boats; the destruction of the French Navy at Casablanca, described with a vividness not designed to smooth Franco-American relations. There are also photographs, hitherto circulated only in Navy secret and confidential publications. (The photographs, incidentally, are so poorly laid out that it is sometimes difficult to associate the captions with the correct pictures.)

The Navy's war in the Atlantic consisted primarily of two major campaigns. The first, the defensive war on the German undersea fleet, is traced from the black days when three ships were being sunk every day, when Delaware Bay was stoppered up with German mines and holiday crowds on the beaches watched surfaced U-boats pound helpless merchantmen to pieces with deck guns. Then there was the grim chess game between the U-boats and the anti-sub forces in which each side countered the move of the other until eventually American technology proved the master of German strategy. Many of the devices used to defeat the U-boats are apparently still classified as secret, since they are not mentioned in the book. Suffice it to say they eventually made the safe return to base of any U-boat in the Atlantic a matter of extreme improbability.

The second great naval campaign in the Atlantic was the amphibious war. The book traces its history from its first stumbling beginnings in the swamps of Virginia to the point where the troops descended like steel avalanches on the beaches of Sicily, Salerno, Normandy, and the

U. S. Marines build a causeway in three-foot surf preliminary to troop landings.

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Riviera. They are inspiring stories.

There are some things in the book that Navy veterans especially will appreciate. The authors love ships. They rarely allow a ship to go out of their story without going on to describe some of the things that happened to it later. They devote much time to describing a practice at which our enemies, and Navy men themselves, never ceased to marvel—how the entire available resources of the Navy, men, materials, ships, and aircraft, were mobilized and even sacrificed to save the life of a single man, sometimes even when it was a practical certainty that the man was dead. Then there are the agonizing memories aroused by the description of the proofs required to receive credit for the sinking of a U-boat. There are hundreds of Naval airmen who have watched submarines in their death throes explode, turn on their sides, or go down stern first at a ninety-degree angle, only to have the assessment board in Washington label them "probably damaged."

This second volume of "Battle Report" is a book that no one who purports to be interested in the war can afford to miss. When the third and final volume appears, the series will probably become the authoritative account of the Navy's role in World War II for a long time to come.

Voices in Moonlight

ERIC WILSON BARKER

"KEATS, KEATS, this was your mistress
Whom men call goddess, your white swan Cytherea
Who came to you in an English wood
Arrowed by Luna and the nightingale:
"Tonight let beauty be poured like wine on the earth,
No, in white cataracts of moonlight,
The dams of plenilune are at the breaking."

The flood rained down. She walked full in the stream,
Naked and silver-shod.

"Is moonlight made audible to the dust
Even of that long sleeping, that you have come?
Yet here is not Rome, nor even England your dearest home,
Where now the hedgerows are twined with sweetness
And soft winds sway the dogrose censers,
And in the woods are those late violets
Might prick you to waking. But California,
Land I have grown to love, lean lion of the sea
Whelped rich millenniums past by the old Pacific lioness.
Hear how she fondles him tonight, this is her temperate season,
But in the winter assails him roaring: 'What is one cub to me?
I have birthed them in litters from here to Asia!'
But there are no claws in this purring. I heard
The old tawny California lion when the moon rose:
'Love me tonight, mother. Lick my gray flanks.
Shake your white mane in the moonlight.'

"Is it strange that I should be here, even in a strange land?
Love's roots go deep as mandragora in the earth.
You may call me forth."

"You were so tired when Severn held you.
You were in love with death in those arms.
I should not rest knowing I had broken that link with sleep.
Dear, yours is so real a shade!"

"But nothing more. When the peony-red blood came up,
Death said: 'Come, we will go out on the dark river together.'
I sank into Severn's kind arms, and the tide slipped over me . . .
How lovely she stands there in the moonlight!
Yet I can contemplate her now without longing!
The incomparable moon-white Aphrodite!
Desire died in the dust, proof of death's constancy."

"She was your mistress once. I know those wounds she made."

"Past all longing. But you who follow her in this lovely-named
Land, word warm as the wind's breath in summer
Through a mountain pinewood—
Have you tasted the wild honeycomb of her mouth?
Have you hived in that barn?
From the valley has she called you hillward?
From the hills has she drawn you down? . . .
Once in a wood at midnight a nightingale was singing.
She came and leaned down over me and the stars
Shone through the nightfall of her hair. . . .
A day the poppies ran like flames in the wheat
She came through the hot autumn fields,
Burnt golden in the sun,
Tall as a huntress who walks on the hills
When the cloud-shadows are caught in her hair.
The clouds came over us and pitched their tents of silence
In the valley of her breasts, and I lay between
The amber hills, long afternoon, long afternoon. . . .

"Do you remember the vineyard, Aphrodite,
That warm hillside droning above the sea?
How heavy the winy-hearted clusters hung?
The sound the purple globes made bursting beneath your flanks?
Whiter than marble under the blood of sacrifice
Was your body beneath that staining!
Your lips were riper than that fruit,
The vine-leaves not so fragrant as your hair!"

"Your voice is full of longing."

"I am only a shadow with the voice of memory.
Desire chokes in the dust. But you too love her.
You will find death where she walks."

And I heard the voice of Aphrodite,
Lover-goddess of John Keats,
Walking naked and silver-shod in California:

"I remember him. When my wave-lapped shell opened its fans
In the first sea I had rumor of that great lover.
In the womb of the unborn future I heard him singing.
When dust has filled the mouth of the last mortal
I will remember him. Yet others will come.
O you poets and singers,
How many of you will enter into me?
Hurl me your spears, your javelins of song!
On the shields of my breasts I will take you!
You, California, from the needled floors
Of your mountain forests to continent's end
I have prepared the way, I have sown you with my beauty. . . .
Love him tonight, mother. Lick his gray flanks.
Shake your white mane in the moonlight."

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Free Like an Elephant

THE FIRST FREEDOM. By Morris L. Ernst. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1946. 271 *pp. Index.* $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM S. LYNCH

IN the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world." These words are taken from President Roosevelt's message to Congress, January 6, 1941. With them as his text Morris Ernst preaches the gospel of democratic channels of communication and declares anathema the persons and companies now in control of our newspapers, our radio, and our movies. Like listeners to most good sermons, readers will utter a hearty amen, and wonder what to do about it. Sign some more petitions, I guess, and call for another Congressional investigation. Mr. Ernst seems to have a good deal of confidence in this latter.

Morris Ernst has won his right to write this volume by his lifelong enthusiasm for the cause of civil liberty and by his constant struggle against giantism in various political and economic fields. If at times he appears to feel he has a monopoly on anti-monopolism, his egotism can be laid to devotion, and his laboring of the obvious to actual infighting with the behemoths of modern finance. He is still a David flinging out at the Goliaths even though he does strut a bit. And the Goliaths he faces here are particularly vicious ones, for as long as they exist in their present forms they threaten directly the minds and bodies of every last one of us. The astronomical figures of newspaper readers, of moviegoers, and of radio listeners are proof of the striking impingement these dispensers of what might laughingly be called ideas have upon us.

Of all our great justices, Brandeis was in some ways the greatest. His distrust of bigness stirred us once but has been forgotten by too many who should never have permitted themselves to forget it. Ernst has not forgotten. His major premise is the valid one of Brandeis, that mere exaggerated size creates presumptions of anti-social power. His other premises are equally valid, that freedom of communication is vital to democracy and peace and that diversity of opinion and partisanship provide the only way of discovering truth. Unlike many of our business men who give lip service to competition as the

—*Eve Harrison*

Morris Ernst "preaches the gospel of democratic channels of communication and declares anathema [those] in control of our newspapers, radio, movies."

quintessence of the American way, he really believes it and he would insure it by forbidding the cartelization of thought which is now the outstanding characteristic of the printed page, the air, and the film.

Most of "The First Freedom" discusses the manifestations of this cartelization, the ways in which it has come about, the means used to preserve it, and the silly rationalizations of its apologists—invariably those individuals who are climbing the pyramids they defend. The blockbooking of films, the monopolization of news, the feature syndicates, the network system, the Hays (now Johnston) office—these and a hundred other means which have evolved as devices for holding together the control and profit of a few great corporations are described at length, lighted by statistics and shown for what they are—parts of a scheme of things smelling suspiciously of an economic totalitarianism as dangerous in its way as political totalitarianism.

The stock argument to justify this sort of thing is of course the tremendous expense or capital outlay necessary to gather the news quickly, purchase the talent for writing and entertainment, or to set up the presses used to devour the forests of the hemisphere. Ernst dismisses the argument with the scant consideration it deserves. And for anyone seriously concerned with the obvious evils attendant on a monopoly of the means for disseminating ideas, the case as he presents it is pretty devastating. The ever-increasing number of non-metropolitan cities with a single paper, the close tieup of newspaper and radio ownership, the power of a few book publishers to keep their volumes on the best-seller list through the seduction of that expensive and luring mistress of America, advertising, should be signals dangerous enough to make us see red.

As a cry of alarm, this monograph is most successful. The constructive side of it will be found too rhetorical and abstract for most readers. It does not get far enough away from the writing-letters-to-Congress stage. Moreover Mr. Ernst's faith in the value of the educational programs and the discussion forums of the air will seem a little touching to anyone who has listened to the ones we are getting over the radio today. In a melancholy mood one is tempted to believe that what we really need are some wholesale Luddite riots to destroy the whole damn thing. But that would not work either, or so they say.

Is Morning Sure?

By Laura Benét

(NEW HAMPSHIRE VILLAGE, 5 A.M.)

HERE is the dark of sunken country earth.
Like the deep grave, a close-mouthed, silent bed,
No flicker in any house of light's re-birth—
One village has surrendered to the dead.

When man emerges slowly, he is gone,
A phantom blanketed in windy cold.
Usurping night so jealous of the dawn,
Watches her as a wolf, a sleeping fold.

Only the cocks are rallying. Their cries
Lose triumph, echo, needle-thin and poor:
"Will that ball, yellow as barnyard corn, arise
Again?" they seem to shrill. "Is morning sure?"

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Two Studies of Keats' Poetry

THE STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF KEATS. By Walter Jackson Bate. New York: The Modern Language Association of America. 1945. 185 *pp.* + *appendices and index.* $3.

JOHN KEATS' FANCY. By James Ralston Caldwell. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press. 1945. 197 *pp.* + *notes and index.* $2.

Reviewed by ROBERT HILLYER

MR. BATE'S work on the stylistic development of Keats shows not only deep scholarship and impeccable taste but also a delight in tracing details of craftsmanship indicative of Keats's growth. These sprang from Keats's own conscientious exploration of technique and his absorption or dismissal of influences from without. A complete familiarity with Keats's own criticism as expressed in his letters and notes enables Mr. Bate to reveal the internal material; in his understanding of Keats's background and reading he seems almost to be breathing the air of the period, and the result is a reconstruction of the phases of the poet's style wherein scarcely a cadence or tonality is left without remark. The analyses of the content of the poems are comprehensive; the microscopic examination of the prosody is without parallel. I cannot imagine that any future commentary on Keats will be able to ignore this book.

In his "John Keats' Fancy," Mr. Caldwell traces the instinctive logic of comparison, contrast, and selection which enabled the poet, admittedly a devotee of the bardic trance, to order his associations with such clarity that he remains the most "classic" of the "romantic" poets. Mr. Caldwell deals with certain misconceptions and disproves them. He points out the important fact that the idea of the poet as the visionary was no mere convention derived from such contemporary figures as Hunt and Wordsworth, but was the living conviction of Keats's artistic self. There follow accounts of the "associationism" of Hartley and Alison, two writers who anticipated modern psychology in their emphasis on the association of ideas and applied the doctrine to the realm of esthetics. This new theory was the common talk of the day and doubtless had its influence on Keats. Mr. Caldwell quotes from the letters passages in which Keats playfully used associations as the stepping stones for his subjects. With rich citations, Mr. Caldwell goes on to show the development of the method of contrast and comparison of associations in Keats's work, so that at last the poet could indeed arrive at definition, the climax of which was that beauty and truth are synonymous. Mr. Caldwell's book is highly original, yet it is restrained within the bounds of assured learning.

North Pacific

By Kimball Flaccus

Wing Over Katmai

WE climb into the great patrol bomber—
Blunt whale body and high wing.
Twin engines roar and the plane vibrates,
Leaps forward and jolts down the runway.
We stand close in her dark, crowded waist,
Self-conscious, hurriedly or with care
Crawl into life-jackets, fumble with buckles,
Help each other adjust parachute harness,
All tense and on edge, even the bravest.
No parachute for the busy pilot;
Plane crew and the plane are in his trust.
Strong arms and legs, powerful shoulders
Match strength with the bomber, guide and wrestle her;
His post the controls, come hell or hurricane,
Riding her down if he must to the sea itself.
Air-borne, we exult in our swift flight,
Wheels up, the critical moment past,
Breathe easy, walk aft in the fuselage.
Globed turrets of glass on either side
Bulge out over space; dodging the guns,
Down we look at buildings falling away,
Doll-houses the grey hangars and barracks.
North over Afognak, our engine-thunder,
Frightening patient bear fishing for salmon,
Reverberates from the steep sides of hills.
Suddenly we are over Shelikof Strait,
Gain height as shadow, dwindling beneath us,
Keeps pace with our passage across the whitecaps.
Land reached again, we follow a glacier,
Jade-colored serpent, up to its source,
High, rough country, athwart the peninsula.
Wing-shadow steadily moves on Katmai,
Terrible mountain once, smoldering now,
Steam rising from banked lava beds
Far under the jagged, circular rim,
Under the still lake of robin-egg blue,
Crater-cradled, with sun-burnished surface.
Stripped of cloud-cover that nearly always
Hides it from view, Katmai the awe-inspiring
Humbled beneath our gaze, is shorn of its secrets.
None speaks; fortunate we to witness
A sight seen by few men in their lifetimes.

Negro Troops, Adak

PATIENT they are, this black Aleutian road-gang,
Courageous, holding wolves of fear at bay;
Toilers in snow, whose fathers toiled in cotton,
Their backs are bowed with weariness today.

Bitter the prospect round them at the moment,
Bitter their memories, and tinged with sorrow.
May their sons walk, as free as any man,
In sunlight down American streets tomorrow.

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The Insane World of Yesterday

THE LIFE LINE. By Phyllis Bottome. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1946. 352 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by WALTER HAVIGHURST

IN "The Mortal Storm," eight eventful years ago, Phyllis Bottome presented a novel in which the gathering violence and insanity of Middle Europe seemed incredible. Now, when the storm has rumbled off to the horizon leaving a continent in chaos, it remains incredible. It seems an insane world that the swastika symbolized. Perhaps this feeling led Miss Bottome to give her new novel, probing deeply into the sickness of Europe, its focus in an Austrian madhouse.

"The Mortal Storm" held readers by the appalling threat of events to come. "The Life Line" is a tense and sombre narration of events past; it reveals the destruction, disintegration, and dismay that were the Nazi gifts to Middle Europe. The course of events is familiar, and hardly less familiar are the joyless purpose of the German people, the sullen endurance of the subjugated nations, and the dark little rivers of resistance that ran underground in the occupied countries. But "The Life Line" is so tightly and articulately written, so steadily mounting in its tensions, that it has no less compulsion. On that score it is a brilliant and irresistible book.

In the long-ago summer of 1938, when an English school master could still spend a holiday climbing in the Tyrol, Mark Chalmers went for his annual visit to Austria, the country in all the world that he loved completely. He found Innsbruck the same steep-roofed city beneath its arc of mountains, but there was a difference. Already Austria was a casualty to the Nazi ambitions; its charm, its culture, and its kindness were stamped out.

Mark had agreed to deliver a message for the British Foreign Office, and that message changed his life. He became a British agent, in a particularly hideous disguise. As a psychiatric patient in a mountain sanitarium, he had access to information of great value to the British government.

Then as a runner in the underground Friends of Freedom he ranged throughout Germany and saw the whole sick fanatic society of the Third Reich.

For a quiet Eton master, fond of literature and solitary mountain climbing, it was a life of kaleidoscopic sequence and variety. There were many strange encounters, many brave and many brutal people, many violences—from the shooting of the peasant girl Lisa to the spiritual death and decay of the once-great artist Prischl in his guarded studio in Berlin.

In the midst of danger, flight, and desperation, Mark Chalmers sought

Phyllis Bottome "has some exceedingly sharp things to say about the bumbling British character."

to understand the mad world about him. This is a novel of ideas as well as of action—ideas of love, of politics, of virtue, of psychiatry, of English and Austrian character, of religion and mountain climbing. Between perils these characters think widely and talk well.

Miss Bottome writes out of a cosmopolitan experience and a thorough knowledge of Europe. With quick, sure strokes she makes places come alive—London, Eton, and Windsor, the cobbled squares of Innsbruck and the high cold slopes of the Tyrol. There are sustained qualities of firmness and clarity throughout the novel. Along with psychological close-ups of her varied people, she presents superb background shots with her characters framed in a mountain landscape or amid the steep-roofed streets of a Tyrol village.

Perhaps this is the reason you keep seeing "The Life Line" on the screen. And, with one exception, the novel's characters do not dispel that impression. Ida Eichhorn, the psychiatrist, is a woman, a doctor, and an Austrian. She is complicated, torn, sardonic, selfish, and selfless; she will present some difficulty to the casting director. But the priest, the artist, the sturdy peasants, and the blustering Nazi officials are all standard. And the over-accomplished Mark Chalmers, mountain climber, horseman, quoter of Shakespeare, with his "phenomenal memory," his "charming light baritone voice," his never faltering grasp of Austrian feeling and idiom, his "habit of fine and courteous leadership," is a more likely figure on the screen than off it.

You will find Miss Bottome has some exceedingly sharp things to say about the bumbling British character, but none of them applies to Mark Chalmers.

Trees with Pomegranates

By Padraic Colum

THE red fruit that, divided, show
A constellation in their seeds,
That Romans named the Punic fruit,
Are heavy shapes 'mid pointed leaves—

The myrtle's. On their unsized trees
Were bell-shaped blooms, geranium's pride
Of scarlet: in their various gloss
Of red, the Pomegranates shine;

Sculptor's dimension in their shape,
To orb from rondure they have gone,
Damasked in redness, and as smooth
As faces in archaic stone.

Upon their stubby trees, amid
Their myrtle leaves, Pomegranates,
Not tinted as our apples are,
But red in all their elements.

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Strictly Personal

ALGOMA'S GIFT TO POESY

AS a general thing, I don't like to swim against the tide of humanity in the matter of literary judgment. In the first place, it's exhausting, and since I've been taking care of my health, I find I can't fight a critic as well as I used to. In the second place, I regret to admit, I have frequently been proved wrong in the passing of time. So I have been more or less forced into taking the position that, one way or another, notable literature always survives.

There is but one exception I still allow myself, and that concerns the works of the late poetess Mrs. Julia A. Moore. I think the world is passing up a good bet in Mrs. Moore. Her "A Sentimental Song Book" in the New York Public Library, I am chagrinned to find, has been taken out only once—according to the charge sheet in the back—and that in 1917.

In my opinion, Mrs. Moore is one of the most interesting and entertaining poets America ever produced. I'll go further: one of the most rewarding who ever wrote in English. (Sorry, Mencken.) I don't say "greatest," you notice. Not even the most ingenuous critic would say that. But certainly interesting, and certainly entertaining.

The reason I don't say "greatest" is that I have a suspicion that, from the conventional point of view, Mrs. Moore is possibly the worst poetess who ever got into print. Certainly the reviewers who discussed her first printed collection of verse (published in paper covers by J. F. Ryder of Cleveland for the centennial celebration of 1876) unanimously agreed on that verdict. (It is interesting to note that one reviewer compared her work to Walt Whitman's. The latter was not completely venerated in 1876.)

Born Julia A. Davis at Plainfield, Michigan, in 1847, Mrs. Moore-to-be was the eldest of four children. "I was born in Plainfield," she said in the preface to her first book, "and lived there until I was ten years of age. Then my parents moved to Algoma, where they have lived until the present day, and I live near them, one mile west of Edgerton."

Another bit of the preface is perhaps a better introduction to Mrs. Moore's poetry. "This little book," she said, "is composed of truthful pieces. All these which speak of being killed, died, or drowned are truthful songs; others are 'more truth than poetry.' They are all composed by the author." There is a certain grammatical abandon in that citation that catches the attention of the alert reader.

Mr. Joseph W. Bishop, Jr., who first introduced me to Mrs. Moore's works, entertained the theory that it takes genius of no unmeasurable standing to be as bad as Mrs. Moore, and with that I am inclined to agree. In any event, Mrs. Moore's poetry is as far superior, in its way, to the verse that, say, *The New Yorker* sometimes prints by way of humor as Milton's is to Robert W. Service's.

Ordinarily bad poetry is just bad poetry; Mrs. Moore's is incredible. One esteemed man of letters once attempted to argue the case for Bloodgood H. Cutter, the "Long Island Farmer Poet," the "Poet Lariat" of Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad."

Now, I will agree that the man who could pen the lines

He (Death) comes to us in so many ways,
And quickly, too, so many slays;
While others, both the weak and strong,
Linger and suffer very long.

But Death is every mortal's doom,
Whether abroad or in his room,
So it behooves all to prepare
For that event with greatest care

is a man of no mean standing in the field. In fact, I find a good deal of charm in Mr. Cutter's works. But compare that with one of Mrs. Moore's finest, "Sketch of Lord Byron's Life":

"Lord Byron" was an Englishman
A poet I believe,
His first works in old England
Was poorly received.
Perhaps it was "Lord Byron's" fault
And perhaps it was not.
His life was full of misfortunes,
Ah, strange was his lot.

The character of "Lord Byron"
Was of a low degree,
Caused by his reckless conduct,
And bad company.
He sprung from an ancient house,
Noble, but poor, indeed.
His career on earth was marred
By his own misdeeds.

Generous and tender hearted,
Affectionate by extreme,
In temper he was wayward,
A poor "Lord" without means;
Ah, he was a handsome fellow
With great poetic skill,
His great intellectual powers
He could use at will.

Sheer genius.

Certainly I have never read such nonchalance in an approach not only to the simple mechanics of poetics, to the iambic and the trochee, but also to the entire mechanics of language and punctuation.

And the thought—follow the impulses of Mrs. Moore's brain. No snap judgments, none of this modern taking-things-for-granted. Mrs. Moore

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is not going to be rushed into assuming that Byron was either poet or peer.

Mrs. Moore takes careful reading. Two or three poems a night is all that the ordinary brain can metabolate, with due regard for cases, genders, tenses, commas, and quotation marks. It has often occurred to me that the publisher getting Mrs. Moore into print must have faced a problem much similar to the one of getting the "Jabberwocky" into print—how to tell the mistakes from the correct text. At any rate, I once found a "hte" in one of Mrs. Moore's books, and I'm still not sure it was a typographical error.

Through some process unknown to me, Mrs. Moore became known as "the sweet singer of Michigan," and her first book bore that title. It went into three editions, a poetic best seller. Pascal Covici (Chicago, 1928) brought out a collection of her works under the same title, and in the introduction to that volume Walter Blair pointed out that in Mrs. Moore's poetry one can find what caught the attention of the American mind of her day and of her attainments.

For the American Centennial Exposition she wrote:

Come all ye friends of Liberty,
  Who love our good old nation,
Let hands and hearts united be,
  And beat the wide creation.
For this is our Centennial year,
  The birthday of our nation;
For it is just one hundred years
  That's stood our good old nation.

Centennial! Centennial!
  Hurrah to the Centennial;
And many, many people gone
  To our national Centennial.

The Ashtabula train wreck, in which eighty-four persons lost their lives, was a national catastrophe. Mrs. Moore (in her "Ashtabula Disaster," to the tune of "Gently Down the Stream of Time") took the subjective point of view:

Have you heard of the dreadful fate
  Of Mr. P. P. Bliss and wife?
Of their death I will relate,
  And also others lost their life;
Ashtabula Bridge disaster.

She wrote "The Great Chicago Fire," "Andrew Jackson," "Croquet by Moonlight," "The Southern Scourge" (dealing with the yellow fever epidemic in the South), and "Leave Off the Agony in Style," being advice on simplicity in dress. There was a poem on the "Grand Rapids Cricket Club." There were innumerable poems about the Civil War, mostly accounts of fourteen-year-olds who volunteered against their mothers' wishes and subsequently died in Southern prison camps.

It was the era of "obituary poetry"

—every man, woman, and child who died was memorialized in verse. Mrs. Moore's work in this field inclined to the factual. I quote from "Hiram Hensel" (to the tune of "Three Grains of Corn"):

He was a small boy for his age,
  When he was five years or so
Was shocked by lightning while to play
  And it caused him not to grow.

He was called little Hi. Hensel
  By all friends that knew him well—
His life was sad, as you shall hear,
  And the truth to you I'll tell.

His parents parted when he was small,
  And both are married again.
How sad it was for them to meet
  And view his last remains.
He was living with his father then,
  As many a friend can tell;
'Tis said his father's second wife
  That she did not use him well.

I do not want it thought that there is irony in this little piece. I am not condescending to Mrs. Moore; and it is not simply that I would be considerate of her departed feelings. Mark Twain said that for him she "had the same deep charm that 'The Vicar of Wakefield' has." He did not like "The Vicar." And I have received far too much pleasure from her work to jibe at her maliciously.

One day she'll be rediscovered. Till then I'll continue to swim against the tide of literary judgment. Others may live, as Mrs. Moore herself said, "unappreciative." JOSEPH CARTER.

Joseph Carter is a member of the staff of the New York Herald Tribune.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

WHO SAID IT?

Can you identify the 20 characters in this week's quiz from the words they said which are quoted below? Allowing 5 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 42.

1. "I am a part of all that I have met."
2. "I am a linen draper bold, as all the world doth know."
3. "Please, sir, I want some more."
4. "I live on toasted lizards, prickly pears, and parrot gizzards, and I'm really very fond of beetle-pie."
5. "My past is shady but wotthehell thank God I'm a lady and class will tell."
6. "I am monarch of all I survey; my right there is none to dispute."
7. "All her hair in one long yellow string I wound three times her little throat around."
8. "Since I left Plum Tree down in Tennessee this is the first time I've been warm!"
9. "One, if by land, and two, if by sea, and I on the opposite shore will be, ready to ride and spread the alarm."
10. "I envy no man, no, not I, and no one envies me!"
11. "I never larf, and I never smile, and I never lark nor play."
12. "I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical, from Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical."
13. "I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!"
14. "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly from its firm base as soon as I!"
15. "With spiders I had friendship made and watch'd them in their sullen trade."
16. "I's wicked—I is. I's mighty wicked, anyhow. I can't help it."
17. "I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year."
18. "I am no orator, as Brutus is, but, as you know me all, a plain blunt man."
19. "It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."
20. "I only took the regular course—Reeling and Writhing, to begin with, and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

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YOUNGER AND OLDER

IN this number the Editor has tried to bring together the older poets and the younger. There has been too much mere warring between them. Each needs to take account of the other. Each needs to have his or her say. The leading article is by a younger poet, who is a member of no "school," whose direct imaginitive vision has been praised by no less a philosopher than John Dewey, while Padraic Colum and the late Stephen Vincent Benét both paid tribute to his striking imagery and memorable quality. He presents the case for the younger poets, for the experimenters, the *avantlay,* an obsolete word that meant the new pack of hounds pursuing the deer already tracked by others, the ghostly hind all poets follow till they die. With great naturalness and a slight ruefulness he remarked to me when I urged the article upon him, "Well, I suppose a poet *should* stick his neck out!"

Last year I printed what I considered an excellent article by Robert Hillyer. Well, here, in a sense, is the rebuttal. We now have both sides of the medal. I believe in a developing tradition; but I also believe in leaving the door open to experimentation. The only poetry I don't care for is the poetry that, with numerous rereadings and the best will in the world, I can make nothing of.

To judge by the many questions in letters that come to me during the year, poets, and a good many of them young ones, want to know a great deal about the making of poetry. Teachers wish to know about it. More youngsters in this country are asking about it, demanding instruction, feeling that a living medium of expression is either being treated as a dead art in a good many of the schools, or is being thrust aside completely. In this number two unusually successful teachers of poetry, also notable poets themselves and both onetime winners of the Pulitzer Prize for the art, tell of their experiences, say things that are of value both to poets and to teachers. In a long and not altogether misspent existence, poetry has been to me as necessary and large a part of life as anything else; and I have had a few other interests besides. Since the life we live has enormously increased in potential danger, and half of the world is in ruins, more than ever we need the lift and delight that poetry can give. We need also its deep wisdom and its enduring faith in life and in mankind. I think any intelligent person has long outgrown the idea that poetry is merely something pretty-pretty and sweet, like a Christmas calendar or a box of candy. Our playwrights, and even our novelists, have been borrowing from it lately. The radio sometimes roars or croons with it; but not when it is Norman Corwin's work or Norman Corwin's voice on the air. He knows the true fire and power of poetry.

As usual, in this special number, we present more poems themselves than any average issue of *The Saturday Review* could accommodate. We hope they represent the catholic taste of the editors. A young poet speaks also of experimentation with Basic English. You will find a good many different points of view in the reviews of poetry. My own belief still is that Kipling completely expressed it when he humorously carolled:

The tale is as old as the Eden Tree
—and new as the newcut tooth—
For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows he is master of Art and Truth;
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane: "You did it, but was it Art?

It is a question jesting Pilate forgot to ask; but it is asked, and frequently didactically answered, by every new generation. For this, then, is demonstrably, definitely, and categorically Art—or this, or that. And this other, that for its own period of time seemed to be the Real, Real Thing, is now quite as obviously the Real, Real Hokum. But "say not the struggle naught availeth." Out of the battle of the generations the new powerful ideas and manners of expression emerge. Beauty gets new clothes. Untapped resources of language are discovered—or glories forgotten and once decried are rediscovered.

The thing that is living goes on. And whether it is Art or not Art comes to matter a great deal less than we thought at first. What does matter is the hand of the artist; and that hand writes because it must; and achieves because, as in Michelangelo's great fresco, the finger of God touches Adam's finger. So the bickerings of all the little schools, cliques, and coteries fall to an unintelligible murmur, when the indefeasible thing is written, when the miracle of words comes to pass.

But the Editor has been talking far too much. I leave you to this number.

W. R. B.

Even the Innocent

By Raymond Holden

Sing not of the now difficult dawn that sweeps
An East on which the dark, like salt black sea,
Stands moveless; or, if singing, let song be
Slight and secure as for a child that sleeps.
Since life began there have been many creatures,
And many ruled the world while man was not.
Now they are gone and now they are forgot,
Forgotten their creeds, their lusts, their deeds, their features.
Man is and in his mind are many beasts
And some will live that live by letting live,
And some will die, the least contemplative
Who rule by famine and who live by feasts.
Never forget that most destructive day
When, from the forest, man, the wild one, came
With knowledge pointed in his mind like flame,
Able at last to choose to save or slay.
Never forget, in innocence of pride,
How even the innocent connive at death,
Running before that wind, now storm, now breath,
Which is man's hope but has a darker side.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Head Is Unbowed

SIR: It is amusing to find an editor bowing his head when he does not need to. Editors are supposed to be a stiff-necked generation, gifted in making others bow the head while they remain self-righteously upright. So the heading to the letter to the editor in the *SRL* for February 23d, "The Head is Bowed," gives me a double-edged pleasure.

The use of the apostrophe in the caption of which the writer complains —"a fellow-citizen of Horace's"—is quite what it should be. It is used as part of a double possessive and that is a very tricky locution. The man to whom the caption refers was one of Horace's fellow-citizens. If Horace had to our knowledge been afflicted with one of our modern germ diseases, it might be possible—and even medically proper—to speak of a long-haired bacillus of a kind fitting for a poet as, with others of the kind, a fellow citizen of Horace.

The failure to use the apostrophe in constructions such as this is peculiarly troublesome in the case of a reference to an author and his work. It may be admissible, if not wholly advisable, to speak either of a play of Shakespeare or a play of Shakespeare's, but a story of Robert Louis Stevenson means a story about the author, while a story of Robert Louis Stevenson's means a story by him. This distinction has come to be altogether too much ignored.

LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH.
Des Moines, Iowa.

Jordan vs. Mumford

SIR: Belatedly, I have been apprised of an article by Lewis Mumford in your issue of August 11, 1945. Since Mr. Mumford refers to my book "Beyond All Fronts," of which your magazine carried a special review in an earlier issue—a review totally at variance with Mr. Mumford's—I may be permitted to make these statements of fact:

(1) "None of these authors," says Mr. Mumford, "dwells on the fact that Carl von Ossietzky, in 1927, was sentenced to prison for revealing the secret militarization of Germany." I wonder whether he has really read (not just glanced through) my book, for on pp. 120-121 specific reference is made to Ossietzky, and the secret armaments of German pre-Hitler militarists are mentioned repeatedly throughout the first part, specifically on p. 10.

(2) Mr. Mumford submits it as my and other authors' thesis that "it was partly through blunders committed by other nations, not Germany," that Germany made no progress on the road to democracy. As a matter of fact the blunders committed by Germany are the very theme of both the first and the second part of my book. As for the blunders committed by other nations, the witnesses I have quoted are excellent company indeed.

(3) "The whole problem of peace, for writers like Max Jordan, is how to make people forget what Germans are and what they have done," says Mr. Mumford. How any reviewer can make a statement such as this in good faith when by far the larger portion of my book dwells on the horrors of Hitlerism and the crimes of German militarism, my readers may decide for themselves. It is true, however, that I differ from those who blame all the German people for the crimes of their evil leaders—a practice that might recommend itself in dealing with other nations as well.

(4) Mr. Mumford makes a good many additional statements which he could have found refuted in my book had he taken the time to read it carefully enough. Had he done so, he would not have spoken of "great improvements in Germany's financial and political state after the Pact of Locarno (cf., for instance, my Appendix I), nor would he have claimed that "the Germans (today) have no sense of moral guilt" (Karl Goerdeler's letters quoted in my book, to mention just one instance, or the pronouncements of responsible religious leaders in Germany since the war prove the very contrary). Also, perhaps, he would have avoided the assumption that writers such as those whose books he was attempting to review "would have the United Nations throw away the principles of justice, by being kinder to the Germans than to their victims." Speaking for myself, I may point out that my book is dedicated to the heroes of the resistance and underground movements in *all* lands. Mr. Mumford would likewise have hesitated to call the late Gustav Stresemann an "underhanded liberal," had he made a careful enough study of the Locarno and Thoiry period of Franco-German relations, and he might have checked various war correspondents' books to find the assumption untenable that the Nazi tyranny amounted to "a rape that was committed with so much visible pleasure on the face of the victim." I, for one, have not noticed that visible pleasure, but I have been a witness to the unspeakable brutalities the Gestapo perpetrated against their own as well as against the foreign peoples.

Of course, such considerations as these entail a willingness on the part of a reviewer to give a hearing to his author. If he considers as "objective surveys of German history" books that start from premises diametrically opposed to those his author proposes,

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"This is Dr. Guillotin—he has a new invention he wants to try out."

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his independence of judgment may be questioned.

Finally, what has happened in Europe since the end of the war may cause Mr. Mumford to reconsider at least some of the views he has maintained in the past.

MAX JORDAN.
Binningen, Switzerland.

SIR: Herr Max Jordan's assumption that I did not read his book carefully is false. His notion that I am under a special obligation to go to that book for evidence which I have obtained directly from more authoritative sources, including Stresemann's letters, is presumptuous. In writing his indictment of the "horrors of Hitlerism and the crimes of German militarism" Herr Jordan omitted to indict their accomplices and accessories, the German people. He confesses as much; and that is precisely what I said. LEWIS MUMFORD.
Hanover, N. H.

Publisher Wields Cudgels (Two)

SIR: I call to your attention this sentence appearing in the February 16 issue in the feature article, "In Search of an Idiom," by Francis Hackett:

> Macmillan let it ("The Yogi and the Commissar") go out of print, not having enough paper for "Forever Amber" and all the other important books, but in the last section of this brilliant and remarkable critique we have science related to values in such a manner that even Professor Irwin Edman, who so caricatures "Perennial Philosophy" as a "failure of nerve," should not be able to dismiss it, and Professor Edman seldom fails of nerve.

Arthur Koestler's "The Yogi and the Commissar" has at no time been out of print since it was published by the Macmillan Company on May 22, 1945. After the second large printing the book was for a short time out of stock, not because there was no paper available, but because the printing could not be scheduled at the printer's. A third large printing is just off the press, and a fourth has already been ordered. Those are the facts.

It is not too much to assume that you as editors and publishers know the difference between a book's being out of print and a book's being out of stock. Mr. Hackett, being merely an author and a critic—though a good author and a fine critic—could hardly be expected to do so. The only quarrel we have with him is that he foolishly resorted to a misstatement and a sly and rather contemptible insinuation just for the sake of smartness and slapping the publishers of Miss Winsor's "Forever Amber" and Mr. Koestler's "The Gladiators," "Dialogue with Death," "Scum of the Earth," "Darkness at Noon," "Arrival and Departure," "Twilight Bar," "The Yogi and the Commissar," and, shortly, his next great novel, "Thieves in the Night." So far as I know, Mr. Hackett has not descended to that before. In his excellent article he makes much of science's being "devoid of moral quality." He forgets for a moment that, as an even finer critic once said, the chief business of the genuine critic is judicious (not judicial) inquiry and the moral obligation of being accurate.

May I also call your attention to a misstatement of fact that appeared in your issue of February 9th in an excellent review by John F. Wharton of another Macmillan book, Erwin Schroedinger's "What Is Life?" Mr. Wharton there wrote:

> Only a few copies have been printed here; most of these have found their way to private ownership; it would probably require some ingenuity to obtain a copy today.

There have been three reasonably large printings of "What Is Life?" For some weeks after the second printing the book was "out of stock." There are now plenty of copies available. These, too, are the facts. A *lawyer*-critic is under even more obligation to make the "judicious inquiry."

GEORGE P. BRETT, JR.
President, The Macmillan Company
New York, N. Y.

A Pioneer in Maya Exploration

SIR: I am nearing the end of a biography of John Lloyd Stephens (1805-1852). Before the manuscript goes into final draft I would like to make a query among your readers for any letters, manuscripts or journals that might not be in my files. Stephens was the co-discoverer of the Maya civilization. His book, modestly entitled "Incidents of Travel in Yucatan," created the science of American archeology. In addition, I am seeking further information on his artist-companion, the Britisher Frederick Catherwood (1799-1854). Although Catherwood painted hundreds of sepia drawings of the Maya ruins, only nine are known to exist today. A detailed search of museums has revealed no others, yet they might be in private collections. I shall deeply appreciate any and all clews.

VICTOR W. VON HAGEN.
c/o Van Wyck Brooks
Westport, Conn.

A Great Browning Library

SIR: Are there any Browning lovers who do not know that on his birthday, May 7, Dr. A. Joseph Armstrong of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, expects to lay the cornerstone of the half-million dollar Browning Library which is to house his magnificent collection of Browningana? He hopes to dedicate the library, free of debt, on the birthday a year later. It is a superb accomplishment for one man to collect a half a million for an ideal—"to project the influence of a moral teacher into the centuries ahead." It is not too late for Browning friends to win a share in that library, and the gratifying realization in years to come that they have made a contribution, however small, to a noble and enduring memorial.

HARRIET GAYLORD
Bronxville, N. Y.

Cheer and Jeers

SIR: Thanks, and thanks again; Philip Wylie's annihilation of Henry Miller (*SRL* Feb. 16) is one of the most beautiful things I have ever read in years. It is worth my last five subscriptions. Why not more things of this sort? Why not puncture a few balloons of absurdity which are floating around? How can a man with William Rose Benét's ability and integrity say words of praise in Dylan Thomas's direction? How can any one understand Thomas? Why not explode a few of these absurd poets?

KENNETH ROCKWELL
Arlington, Texas

Radiodiums

SIR: Through soapy-dopey singing ad
I suffer, but I really foam
When some coy folksy-wolksy lad
Says he will read a little pome.

LARRY GOULD
Vinalhaven, Maine

"Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote . . . "

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Wasp with Magnanimity

THE DUNCIAD. By Alexander Pope. Edited by James Sutherland. New York: Oxford University Press. 1945. 459 *pp.* $8.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

IF the other volumes of the Twickenham Edition of the poems of Alexander Pope are as well edited as "The Dunciad," then we shall have reason to be grateful to Professor Butt and his colleagues. The reviewer is not an expert on Pope and his times, but he has admired "The Dunciad" ever since he stumbled on it in a second-hand book shop forty years ago and suffered the appropriate purgation of mind which is induced by pity, terror, and ineffable humor. In his opinion Professor Sutherland has done a wonderful job. Dozens of difficulties have been removed. The notes are informative, to the point, modest, and short. And Professor Sutherland has his own ideas about Pope. Furthermore they seem to be very good ones and quite at variance with accepted dogmas which have been uncritically passed on from critic to critic for over a hundred years.

Professor Sutherland presents us with a cento of the 1728 or Theobald Dunciad, together with the annotations of Scriblerus, and follows it up with the 1743 or Cibber Dunciad in which Theobald was dethroned in favor of the Laureate. The relevant emendations of the innumerable editions are all shown in such a manner that a scholar may track them or the casual enthusiast may ignore. The book, in short, is a first-rate compromise as between the demands of learning and pleasure. The personality and powers of one of the greatest of poets have had light thrown upon them in no uncertain manner, and it was high time.

Lord Macaulay was a great and highly entertaining writer, but it may be doubted if any one ever had a greater talent for forming false estimates and persuading multitudes that they were just. His notions concerning James Boswell still carry weight in spite of the labors of generations of discerning scholars and the publication of the Malahide Papers. Half the cultivated world believes his dicta on Horace Walpole. And the whole cultivated world to this day by a sort of osmosis has been poisoned by his views on Pope.

In a particularly splendiferous essay, written at the height of his powers, Macaulay found occasion to take Pope apart because of Pope's extraordinary and no doubt unjust attack on Addison. Except Pope's own, there never was a more brilliant piece of denigration. By the time that Macaulay got through with him, Pope had become a sort of Mr. Hyde, Addison being Dr. Jekyll. He was a man whose deformed body had poisoned his mind, a creature incapable of gratitude, of friendship, of generosity, who imputed his own vile motives to all humanity, "a human scorpion whose only pleasure was in his sting." He was a liar, a trickster, a backbiter, whose mind was full of loathesome images and whose heart had never known gentleness, decency, or courtesy. In short he was the Pope with whom lecturers and the editors of text books, who made no mention of Macaulay, were once in the habit of familiarizing us.

Now it would be absurd to pretend that Pope bore much resemblance to a lily. He was a morbid and sensitive man in a full-blooded and by no means delicate time. And he appears to have suffered from a persecution mania, which was natural enough, as has been noticed, in a man who was both a hunchback and a Catholic. The result of these circumstances was that he reacted, against his nature, in a manner that was often savage and passionate. He could also be as wrongheaded and mistaken as the next man. And he not infrequently declared war on persons on whom no war should have been declared. The most conspicuous instance is Addison. But Bentley, in spite of his edition of "Paradise Lost," and Defoe, even if he was opposed to Pope's friends, were not proper candidates for membership in any Dunciad. Nevertheless, if we forgive as we hope to be forgiven, Pope appears quite a different person from the disgusting wasp invented by Macaulay. There is, as Professor Sutherland suggests, a note of residual malice in the "Prologue to a Play for Mr. Dennis's Benefit." But what man has had a handsomer thing said about him than was said of John Dennis by a mortal enemy? This was a strange wasp full of magnanimity, if he was given half a chance. The reviewer does not think it would be difficult to prove Pope was a lot more generous to the unhappy living than Macaulay to the defenseless dead.

As to the great satire, the mark of genius is apparent in every line of both versions and in the very rejected passages which Pope's meticulous hand cast forth. It has been said that in the manuscript of Comus, Milton struck out lines that would have set up a lesser poet for ever. The compliment may be repeated. Even the immoderate filth, which startled the stout-stomached First Georgians and for a modern has the vivid but slimy interest of a gila monster, is neutralized and disinfected by the superb mirth which informs the whole. That mirth rather than the equally superb "wit" is the note of the poem. Never was there such sport royal. Never was greatness parodied with such grace. And never was smallness dissected with so precise if indelicate a microtome. Dryden's spectacular lance seems almost clumsy beside the lightning rapier of the hunchback. Incidentally we might mention that, however terrible and, in some instances, unjust the fate that befell them, Concanen, Gildon, Oldmixon, Curle, Theobald (hurled down from his bad eminence), and Cibber are forever involved in poetry of frightening splendor. Though Samuel Johnson's aphorism has become trite, it is still perfectly true: "It was worth while being a dunce then." One might add that it might almost have been interesting. Times change, not always for the better. But it will be a long cold day before men forget the necromantic laughter which could at once immortalize and exterminate such folly as bears a family resemblance to our own absurdity.

Affirmation

By Edith Warner Johnson

NOW that veiled terror never dreamed before
Crouches in shadow,
There is death or an open door,
Confusion of doom or a new light to follow.

We will rebuild the cities of our sorrow
Facing the sun;
In the redeeming labor of tomorrow
With burning hope recapture what has gone.

Not through dark mountains will we dig in fear
Of the unknown,
But turn to the springtime air,
To the new flowering of a world made one.

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TRADE Winds

I HAVE JUST completed a one-month stint on the Grand Jury—a ponderous body that is in no sense as important as it sounds. A great majority of the cases brought before it are piddling and dull, with indictments so clearly mandatory, or dismissals so obviously imperative, that the necessary corroborative testimony is almost intolerably cumbersome and boring.

Twenty-three citizens give up two hours a day for a solid month to perform their civic duty on a grand jury; it doesn't seem fair to take up their time with barroom brawls where nobody was seriously hurt and nobody tells the same story, or petty thievery that a courageous magistrate could have dealt with adequately. Three out of four cases stem from the wretched conditions in Harlem, and highlight the crying need for better housing in that hopelessly congested area. . . .

LUNCHING WITH AN attorney at a spaghetti emporium near the courthouse, I heard of two cases that at least produced a glint of humor. One involved an intrepid proprietor of an uptown delicatessen. He had been robbed a few months previous by a gunman who forced him to empty the contents of his pockets and his cash register into a paper bag. The loss was over a hundred dollars, but the obvious desperation of the robber had touched him, and he made no complaint to the police. To his understandable dismay, however, the gunman suddenly turned up for a repeat performance, adding, "Don't give me no check like you did last time. I had to tear it up!" The delicatessen man turned to his cash register, picked up a length of lead pipe, conked the gunman back of the ear, and dragged him, unconscious, to the nearest policeman. His complaint: "I don't like to be played for a sucker."

Another law evader showed a nice sense of propriety. Four years ago he had stolen a Packard coupe from a parking lot. He had called the attendant on the phone, explaining that the owner was sending someone over to pick up the car, and then calmly claimed it a few minutes later. The obliging attendant had even driven it to the curb for him, and had the motor running. He had never been apprehended. Convinced that his method was sound, he tried it again, but this time the Cadillac convertible he selected was a bit too spectacular, and the police nabbed him the next day in Westchester. He readily admitted both thefts, explaining, "The Packard was getting too shabby for a man in my position." . . .

MYSTERY CONNOISSEURS have two treats in store for them: John Dickson Carr's "He Who Whispers" is off the presses at Harper's and Dodd, Mead announce "The House in Lordship Lane," first new thriller in a long time by the A.E.W. Mason whose "House of the Arrow" is just about my favorite murder story. . . . Dutton will publish a new novel by A. A. Milne in August. It's called "Chloe Marr." . . . Outstanding figures of the war years are working away like mad on their autobiographies. Admiral Halsey has signed with Whittlesey House; Cordell Hull with Macmillan. . . . Frederic Wakeman, whose first novel, "Shore Leave," hit the bell, has done it again with "The Hucksters." (Rinehart). It's a tale of the advertising world, and is the June selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. . . . Viking's headliner for April is Gene Fowler's autobiography, "A Solo in Tom-Toms." . . . Alfred Knopf's private gold mine, "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran, is still producing. He has just ordered another printing of 100,000 copies. The book sold only 1,200 copies in 1923, the year it was printed. Now the total is approaching the half-million mark. "Prophet" is right!

Publishers' Row will not be happy to hear that Margaret Byrnes, book buyer at Macy's and Bamberger's for the past fourteen years (and at Bamberger's for two years before that), is resigning as of April 1. She feels that she is entitled to a long rest and a chance to spend some time with her husband and her two sons, now homeward bound from the Pacific. The entire book business is indebted to Peg Byrnes for scores of valuable suggestons and innovations, and for her tact and skill in handling a job that has long been one of the storm centers of the industry. Her successor at Macy's has not yet been named. . . .

SAMUEL GRAFTON AND I bustled down to the Paramount Theatre to catch one of the early morning appearances of Danny Kaye near the end of his spectacular three-week run there. His wife, Sylvia (who writes many of his best songs), had told us of the pandemonium that prevailed, and we wanted to see for ourselves.

The first twenty rows of the theatre were occupied solidly by bobby soxers who came at the crack of dawn, brought their lunches with them, and stayed straight through to closing time. When Kaye came out on the stage they roused from their slumber and began squealing with ecstasy. A dozen ran to the apron of the stage and handed him their wrist watches, rings, sandwiches, apples on a stick, and miscellaneous trinkets, all of which he accepted gravely. (He spent the time between shows persuading donors of the more valuable gifts to take back their loot.) When some heckler yelled, "Aw, go back to Brooklyn where you belong," Danny had only to say, "Girls, take care of that palooka." The heckler was all but rent limb from limb. When Dan-

"We would never tolerate this sort of thing in California."

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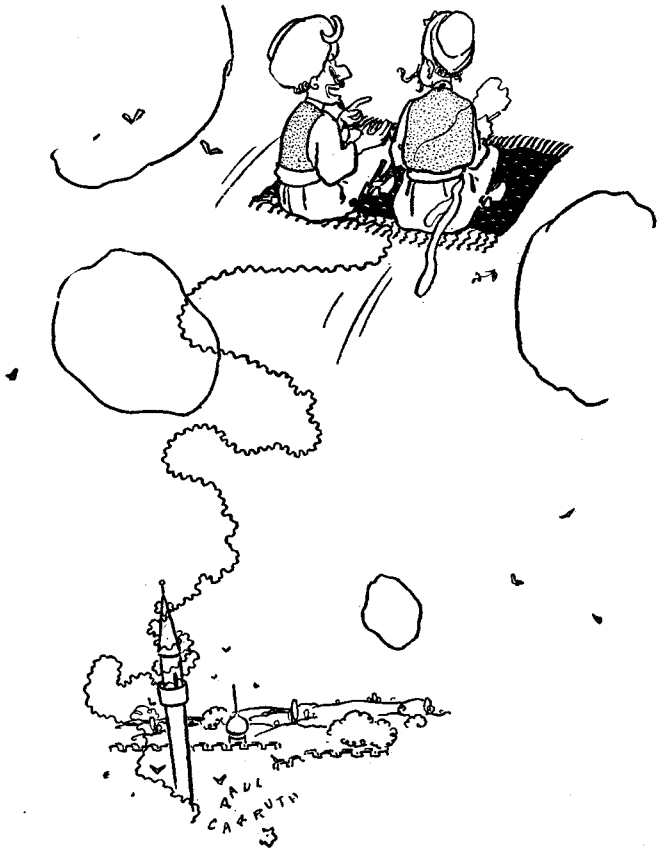


"I've always said, Ali, 'What does it matter how it looks so long as it gets us there?'"

ny's hair got mussed, four girls rushed up with combs for him.

The amazing factor in Kaye's rise to national fame is that it was accomplished by just two motion pictures: "Up in Arms" and "Wonder Man." (His new one, "The Kid from Brooklyn," will be released next month. It is riotously funny.) Before that Kaye had established himself as a great comedian on Broadway, but the country at large didn't know him. Now he's in for good. Not only is he a superlative performer, but his warm and friendly personality makes the kids feel he is one of them. The rigid time schedule of the Paramount was abandoned entirely during his stay. Scheduled for thirty-five minutes, his act often ran well over an hour, while he questioned the audience about their high-school teachers, or sprawled on the stage and let those first twenty rows of youngsters (who, of course, knew his act backwards) do an entire number for him in concert. One of the kids who besieged him for autographs at the stage door could not speak above a whisper; Danny lifted her into his car and took her to his own throat specialist to see if her voice could be restored.

All these faithful slaves, of course, slowed down the turnover, but Danny threatened the house records anyhow. Watching him keep those unruly kids completely in hand, and improvise masterly bits of clowning in the middle of his act, provided the great thrill one always gets from seeing a man who is tops in his profession go about his business. It was the thrill audiences get from a Fred Astaire, a Sonja Henie, a Lunt and Fontanne, or a Babe Ruth. There is no distance greater than that between the real headliner and the runner-ups!

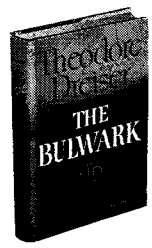
In the middle of the performance we saw, Danny Kaye suddenly spied a six-year-old girl in the audience. He stopped short, descended to the orchestra floor, and carried the deliriously happy little girl to the loud speaker. "Say something to the audience," commanded Danny. In a loud and confident voice, she said, "Huba huba." . . .

OF ALL THE ANIMALS in the Bronx Park Zoo, Mrs. Bibbledoffer liked the gnus best. What it was about them she could not explain, but she was unable to tear herself away from their enclosure.

When a keeper sauntered by, Mrs. Bibbledoffer stopped him. "What enchanting animals gnus are," she enthused. "Are they vicious? Do they bite?"

"Lady," said the keeper tersely, "the motto of this zoo is 'No Gnus is Good Gnus.'" BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"



"The death of THEODORE DREISER removes from the American Scene something primary brooding and enormous. It is as if a headland crumbled and slid into the sea," wrote Howard Mumford Jones in the *New York Times*.

DREISER'S death affords another chance for adjectives to come up from out of their holes and form into big pictures. People feel the need to somehow compensate for his loss by remarking on his size as a writer. A great space is left where the giant was and no one can guess when it will be filled again.

The Bulwark, his next to last novel, has just been published. In a posthumous sense, it is an extension of his life, since it embodies the great themes he used in the past. Solon Barnes is a Quaker. Honest, and unworldly, he is also industrious. Prosperous from the start, he becomes a wealthy Philadelphia banker, and a bulwark of the Quaker faith. This was all toward the end of the 19th century.

The conflict of a changing America and a new generation comes with his children, and the rending apart of the family, so typical of American life, occurs. The progress towards disaster becomes inevitable, and resolution of the final tragedy comes only in Solon's realization of his own intensified faith in God and his motivating principles of mercy and love.

Such a summary reads back to me like a school book report, obvious, and time-worn in its implications. But perhaps DREISER has given us a new approach to a problem which in the practical American mind is becoming uninteresting. Every minute there is a new drama, a new death struggle being fought between good and evil. Only a dying race, a crumbling culture could ignore or disparage such a struggle. If we deny the struggle, it is because we are confused, and because, being a practical people, we know that evil may be presented in more concrete terms, more graphically than good. And this makes us lose faith in the less tangible, less positive assertions of good.

DREISER'S America will go on, it will not die now that he is dead. But it must lift the boulders he lifted, and fashion **The Bulwark** he hewed.

paul

DOUBLEDAY

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Seeing Things

A. WOOLLCOTT IN PRINT—PART II

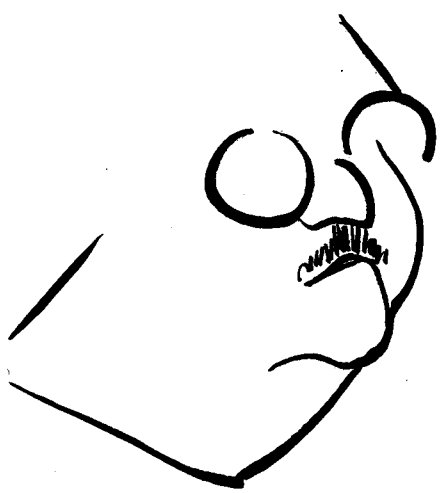
LIKE everyone else Woollcott listened to what he wanted to hear. If he had better ears than most people, it was not because their length was greater but because his interests were stronger. He listened out of hunger not politeness. Once his curiosity was aroused, no fictional sleuth in pursuing his quarry could be as undeviating as Woollcott in tracking down a story. He tapped other minds to fill his own. What he had heard he did not forget. He had the memory of a pachyderm, and a pianola's loyalty to the same tunes.

His curiosities were in themselves curious. The "repertoire of his enthusiasms" was more extensive than the most ambitious repertory of which Granville Barker dreamed. It ranged from the A.E.F. and Dickens, and such dissimilar women as Mrs. Fiske and Lizzie Borden, to Irving Berlin, the four Marxes, Gilbert and Sullivan, Kipling, forgotten murders, Hamilton College, Thornton Wilder, and, of course, Sir James M. Barrie.

If Woollcott was justified in describing himself as "an ink-stained wretch," the ink which stained him was not limited to his own abundant copy. All his life he dunked himself each day in a sea of printer's ink. He doted on books, and was a bookish man. At his best he used the language as one who loved it; at his worst as one who was infatuated with it. Words sang for him, and he could make them sing. Unlike Lamb and Hazlitt, however, he did not cut into the haunch of letters while discussing the haunch of mutton on the table. He was contented with the chops of literature, sometimes the scrapple, occasionally the tripe.

Both as critic and reader Woollcott dodged the peaks. He chose instead the green pastures at his own level. Off the sweet clover and sour sorrel of these he nibbled quite happily, and cajoled thousands of others to find joy by following his example. His tastes were safely below the timberline. If he seldom lifted his eyes to the hills, it was because he was too engrossed in what was happening next door. Most of the classics he cherished were minor, even when as classics they were not questionable. It was perhaps inevitable that he should have given more thought to "Margaret Ogilvy" than to Milton, to "The Dolly Dialogues" than to Dryden, and to Ian MacLaren's "A Doctor of the Old School," than, say, to "War and Peace."

The imponderables left Woollcott cold. He was as untouched by sublimity as he was attracted by oddity. The books he liked best were those which stimulated his imagination, which sometimes overtaxed his heart, but with which his mind did not have to wrestle. Intellectually he was no more athletic than he was physically. Croquet was his favorite game.



—*William Auerbach-Levy*

"Woollcott the critic was never the Woollcott who mattered . . . Read as a critic, he was often disappointing; read as Woollcott he seldom failed to be diverting."

He played it with incredible dexterity —with both his mind and body.

The coziness of the fireside or the excitement of the footlights brought him greater pleasure than the challenge of squinting at the sun. For pedantry, and any form of Ph.D. pretension, he had a proper hatred. If he avoided grappling with the titans, and did not mind having the midgets down him, it was not because he lacked courage or industry. It was because his every instinct led him to be as fascinated by mortals as he was indifferent to the immortals. He found, and gave, delight in trying to immortalize his contemporaries. He did this by crowning his likes with halos, and plunging his hates in sulphur.

Woollcott, the critic, was never the Woollcott who mattered. I say this because it took me a long time to realize it myself. I say it because so many people still judge him in terms of the position he once filled rather than the gifts he brought to it. Read as a critic, he was often disappointing; read as Woollcott, he seldom failed to be diverting. He had as little interest in the dull orthodoxies of nightly reporting as he had in the so-called higher criticism.

There has always been a recruitable army of sobersides equipped to release the jargon of pedestrian reviewing. I mean aisle-seat occupants in every city of every land, who can write with a certain grave competence about what they have just seen. With them their opinions matter; with Woollcott his copy did. Due to the cruel pressure of their deadlines, these reviewers are tempted to feel they have done their duty when they dash off such phrases as, "To the Longacre last night came a bright little comedy produced with George Spelvin's *usual* skill." Or "Miss Georgiana Spelvin in the title role was quite *inadequate* as Hedda Gabler."

Woollcott did not belong to this tribe. Clichés were not the natural language of his spirit. He scarcely ever resorted to tired words. He did not write *about* the theater. His reviews, in addition to being one of the most delectable breakfast foods on the market, *were* in themselves theater.

The heat with which Woollcott fueled his copy was his substitute for criticism. A. B. Walkley once contended that, just as one solid body cannot collide with another without creating heat, so one mind cannot impinge upon another without generating criticism. In Woollcott's case the warmth of his reviews was created less by the friction of two minds than by the impact of another mind on Woollcott's heart. Though admirably equipped to think, Woollcott preferred to feel. Ideas did not interest him as much as people. He rejoiced in personalities, and left principles alone. Never a slave to theory, he confessed more and more in his writings that the anecdote was his master. Before long, it was of the anecdote itself that he became a master.

I dwell on Woollcott's days as a dramatic critic because a part of Woollcott dwelt ever after in the theater. He may have abandoned daily reviewing in 1928, but the theater was always with him. His progress was simple. When he had done with sitting on the aisles, he merely stepped across the footlights. He became a performer himself, both in and out of print.

Along with Phalanx, N. J., the mumps, Hamilton College, and the First World War, the stage was one of the determining influences of his career. Although his horizons wid-

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ened, the world through which he subsequently moved—even as a foreign correspondent—continued to be lighted by a spotlight. The ribbon on his typewriter remained dipped in grease paint. He never touched life without rouging it. He insisted upon seeing it with its make-up on. His subjects continued to be theater people. When they were not, they were men and women who appealed to him because their lives were dramatic or their personalities theatrical.

Woollcott's dish was trivia. Dish? More precisely, his caldron. He could ladle it out, endlessly, enchantingly. He had the skill to make it seem important, and the wisdom to recognize that it was so.

He was the most creative uncreative person imaginable. He can be described as the man who couldn't write fiction but who did. No journalist of our time could so clothe an episode in the trappings of the novelist. All of his pieces have a fairy-tale quality about them. One of their chief surprises is that they do *not* begin with "Once upon a time." Although they are fairy tales of fact, they are filled with as much wonder as if their origins were fanciful. Woollcott's mind was filled with entertaining oddments no less than with pressed flowers. He saw life in terms of curtain lines, delayed arrivals, and O. Henry twists. He was able to distend a minor incident until it became a story, and to tell a short story merely by withholding a person's name.

Woollcott rejoiced in coincidence. He was never happier than when giving its long arm a tug. In his own phrase, "we love to catch life in the very act of rhyming." In his pages he saw to it that life did rhyme. He liked it when the impossible proved to be not only a probability but an actuality.

He was Shakespearean, and romantic, enough to believe that the heavens were concerned with the fate of his characters. Woollcott was a great one to dignify his coincidences with celestial repercussions. When, for example, he tells us how Anne Parrish found on the quais in Paris the very copy of "Jack Frost and Other Stories" which she had read as a child in Colorado Springs, and in which she had scrawled her name, Woollcott cannot resist appealing to a higher echelon than the Planetarium. "Somewhere," writes he, regrettably, "in fathomless space a star chuckled—chuckled and skipped in its course."

That there was a Woollcott trick, any reader, however inconstant, soon discovers. Like the Indian rope trick, it is performed visibly before our eyes, not once but over and over again. Yet the stubborn truth re-

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mains that, though everyone can name it, no one else can do it. Columbus astonished the wiseacres merely by flattening an egg so that it would stand on its end. Woollcott's wizardry was never this matter of fact. Although the last thing he would ever do was to flatten the egg he was handling, he almost always succeeded in making it stand on its end. To do this, he dipped it in a wash of his own. The colors of this wash may be simple enough to describe; the formula for the dye remains a mystery. In spite of hundreds of writers having tried to do what he did, only Woollcott could pull it off.

He seldom told one story at a time. His anecdotes came not singly but in dynasties. He approached his main story through a labyrinth of lesser ones. His practice was to beckon us down by-paths to reach a by-path. Yet all the while he was able to give us the illusion of having traveled the main road, or the sense of relief that comes from having avoided it.

He had a ruminative mind. It was a samovar of memories. With him one story led to another as inescapably as with a chain smoker one cigarette leads to the next. "Hang the age! I'll write for antiquity," exclaimed Charles Lamb. Woollcott's approach was just the opposite. Although he wrote for the present, he never forgot the past. He was as fond of reprinting an old playbill on muslin as he was of dousing a tale of forgotten murder with its original gore. He succeeded as a delver into the past not merely because he was by temperament nostalgic but because for him almost anything that had ever been hot news remained contemporary.

He had a passion for success stories. Horatio Alger did not like them more. Although Woollcott knew many of the so-called great of the earth, it pleased him to recall their humble origins. The greater the odds against which they had had to fight, the warmer his admiration for them burned.

That Woollcott was a sentimentalist I doubt if even he would have denied. Instead of being ashamed of tears, he luxuriated in happenings, real or imaginary, which left "an honorable moisture" on his "old lashes." He liked to have the "cockles of his heart" touched, regardless of whether he referred to that organ as "aging" or "foolish." By his own description he was a "bogus curmudgeon."

His decency, I suspect, may have been responsible for his easy surrender to pathos; his decency, and his acute awareness of the insecurities of life and how tarnished is maturity. His experiences overseas with the A.E.F. remained to the end the high point of his living. He had seen war plain, and felt it deeply. He was unable to abandon its ecstasies. Into the peace which followed he carried the emotions he had experienced in wartime. To those who had never known these emotions, or who had forgotten them in the security they regained, the pitch of Woollcott's feelings naturally seemed at times excessive.

YOUR LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "Ulysses," by Alfred Tennyson. 2. "John Gilpin," by William Cowper. 3. "Oliver Twist," by Charles Dickens. 4. Robinson Crusoe, in "Robinson Crusoe Story," by Charles Edward. 5. mehitabel, in "archy and mehitabel," by Don Marquis. 6. "Verses Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk," by William Cowper. 7. "Porphyria's Lover," by Robert Browning. 8. Sam McGee, in "The Cremation of Sam McGee," by Robert W. Service. 9. "Paul Revere," by Henry W. Longfellow. 10. "The Miller of the Dee," by Charles Mackay. 11. James, in "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell," by W. S. Gilbert. 12. Major-General Stanley, in "The Pirates of Penzance," by W. S. Gilbert. 13. "The Highwayman," by Alfred Noyes. 14. James Fitz-James, in "The Lady of the Lake," by Sir Walter Scott. 15. "The Prisoner of Chillon," by Lord Byron. 16. Topsy, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Harriet Beecher Stowe. 17. Becky Sharp, in "Vanity Fair," by William Makepeace Thackeray. 18. Mark Antony, in "Julius Caesar," by William Shakespeare. 19. Sydney Carton, in "A Tale of Two Cities," by Charles Dickens. 20. The Mock Turtle, in "Alice in Wonderland," by Lewis Carroll.

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Worshiping both fame and the theater as he did, it was no doubt unavoidable that Woollcott should have eventually turned star himself, and devoted most of his talents to becoming a public personality behind the footlights and on the air. Years ago, in a book called "Mr. Dickens Goes to the Play," he had drawn a sketch of his idol which, at least in some of its details, could one day serve as a portrait of himself.

"Had Dickens lived in the twentieth century," wrote Woollcott, "the Freudians, taking one shrewd, amused, infuriatingly perspicacious look at him, would have analyzed him on the spot. They would have noted his clumsy efforts at playwriting, his adoration of Macready, his wistful loiterings at the stage-door, of which the faint, unmistakable aroma was ever the breath of his nostrils, and his disarming readiness to laugh and cry at the most ordinary of performances in any theater. They would have noted his pantomimic gyrations when in the throes of composition. They would have known that the young novelist who walked the nightmantled streets of Paris in an agony of sympathy for the dying Paul Dombey was a sidetracked actor. They would have noted his . . . comically transparent excuses for appearing in amateur dramatics, his gallant and undeniably Thespian appearance and his flamboyant raiment, geranium in the buttonhole, brilliantine on the hair, rings on the fingers and all, which distressed his sedate friends but satis-

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fied something within him. They would have noted all these things and published in some obscure journal an article written to demonstrate that Mr. Dickens was suffering from an exhibition complex. This would have maddened him. He would have dictated sixteen furious letters demanding retraction, growing the redder in the face as he paced the floor because he would have known that it was all quite true. That half-smothered desire gnawed at him through all the years of his growth until at last it found an outlet which brought him peace."

In spite of its many attempts, the radio has produced no one who could touch Woollcott; no one who had his sense of melodrama and suspense; no one who could bite the language with his precision; no one who could tell a story with his skill. If hearing him on the air was a delight, seeing him on the stage, especially in "The Man Who Came to Dinner" was also excellent sport.

Yet the tragedy of his hugely successful last years is that the more widely known he became as a character, the less active he became as an author. His crotchets captured the imagination as his phrases had once done. Ironically, to a whole group of youngsters who had never read him, he was better known as Sheridan Whiteside than Alexander Woollcott. His idiosyncrasies and his foibles came to loom larger in the public mind than his genuine endowments as a writer.

Woollcott was far too good a writer to be forgotten. He was one of the best yarnspinners of his time. He was a raconteur who could achieve the miracle of seeming to talk in print. None of his contemporaries could use an adjective with his lethal precision. None of them tossed his hat so high in the air, or danced so happily in the streets. None squandered superlatives with his abandon. He was a buoyant enthusiast.

Beyond all this, however, he was an instinctive writer. The rich juices of his spirit course through his prose. Not merely the prose he wrote for publication, but through his letters, too. And letters are the final test of the instinctive writer.

Our world and our public prints are the paler for his going.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

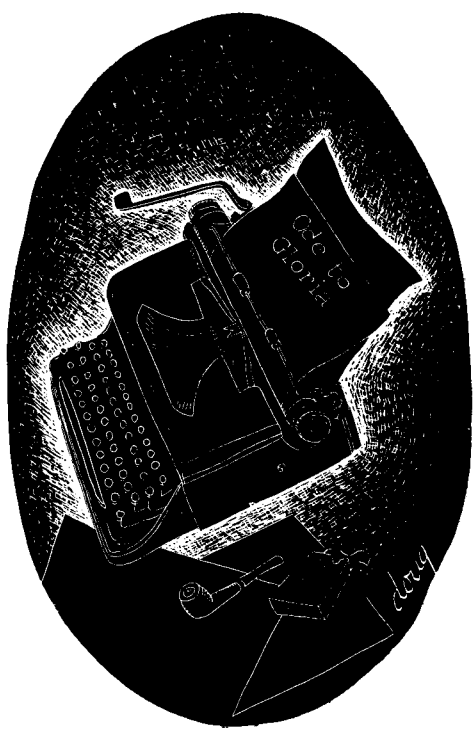
This is the second of two articles on Alexander Woollcott. In expanded form these articles will serve as the introduction to "The Viking Portable Library Woollcott." The book will be published early in April. These sections are reprinted by arrangement with the Viking Press.

Modern or Medievalist?

THIRTY POEMS. By Thomas Merton. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 1945. Unpaged. $1.

Reviewed by LOUISE T. NICHOLL

IN these thirty pieces, as many poems as Merton has years, the poet shows himself a combination of cool intellectual and delicately ardent mystic; the volume brings him from a clever boy with detached, unyouthful gift, to Trappist monk inditing poetry much like a saint's, full of great sweetness and an early joy; an intricate and slightly archaic church music. His new direction, in fact,



bends him back at times almost to the exquisitely picked-out and precise simplicity of earlier centuries: to something which might be gently crabbed were it not so lightened and leavened with the Joy of the Lord. Whether he is a modern or a medievalist is the question.

There is at times an aloofness, a seeming absence of personal involvement with worlds either sacred or profane; when he is the singer at, but not of, the Court; weirdly proficient on the strings, with a thin tone high and full of joyance. At such times he is enraptured at the sheerness of the light embracing Godhead; sings for joy at its radiance but is not burned by it. But in the last poem, "The Sponge Full of Vinegar," are these lines, which show how far a thirtieth poem can reach:

> O Lord! When I lie breathless in Thy churches
> Knowing it is Thy glory goes again
> Torn from the wise world in the daily thundercracks of massbells,
> I drink new fear from the four clean prayers I ever gave thee!
> For even the Word of Thy Name caught from Thy grace,
> And offered up out of my deepest terror,
> Goes back gallsavored of flesh,
> Even the one good sacrifice,
> The thirst of heaven, comes to Thee: vinegar!
> Reeks of the death-thirst manlife found in the forbidden apple.

The poems set first in the book are sometimes marked with difficulties of meaning and a cold futility of mind. To come from them to "The Sponge of Vinegar" is a far journey, winding as it does through the slender and enchanting land of "St. Agnes: A Responsory" and "The Holy Child's Song"—the primavera poems, the chamber music, singing with the choir. A gift and capacity as flexible as this, and able for such swiftness to the goal, makes one eager to see future work.

One other poem, "For My Brother: Reported Missing in Action, 1943," must be quoted from: the one poem which combines the two lives in the way which only Catholicism can:

> 'Where, in that desolate and smoky country,
> Lies your poor body, lost and dead?
> And in what landscape of disaster
> Has your unhappy spirit lost its road?
> Come, in my labor find a resting place
> And in my sorrows lay your head,
> Or rather take my life and blood
> And buy yourself a better bed—
> Or take my breath and take my death
> And buy yourself a better rest.
>
> 'When all the men of war are shot
> And flags have fallen into dust,
> Your cross and mine shall tell men still
> Christ died on each, for both of us.'

Memo

By Ben Ray Redman

TOMORROW is soon,
Tomorrow is now,
Tomorrow is far away;
Tomorrow is ever,
Tomorrow is never:
But yesterday was tomorrow,
The day before yesterday.

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"Few have been honored with the name Poet . . ."

"Few have been honored with the name Poet, and have not possessed a skill in words, a sympathy with beauty, a tenderness of feeling, or seriousness in reflection, which render their works better worth reading than much of what fills the scanty hours that most men spare for self-improvement or for pleasure.—And if this be true of even mediocre poetry, for how much more are we indebted to the best!"

— from the Preface to PALGRAVE'S GOLDEN TREASURY

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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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HEARING THINGS

WHAT IS OPERA?

LOOKING at the billboard of the Metropolitan Opera House one is surprised to see the whole of the lyric stage, from eighteenth-century opera buffa to Wagnerian music drama, conveniently lumped together under "grand opera," a term which rightfully belongs to a certain type of opera that originated in nineteenth-century France. If the leaders of our operatic culture are so hazy about opera it is small wonder that the public at large is entirely at sea when confronted with this hybrid art form. It is pretty generally agreed upon that opera is an impossible combination of music and drama, for the combination of two arts each of which is capable of giving full satisfaction by itself is bound to lead to conflict. If we join two halves we obtain a whole, but when two wholes are pounded together into another whole, plain logic suggests that each will lose in some proportion. Ever since the time of Steele and Addison, opinion has tended toward considering the opera libretto half-drama and its music half-music. As to the public, already considerably handicapped by the obstinate tradition peculiar to the Metropolitan of presenting opera in foreign tongues, it has come to regard the libretto as a thing to be overlooked, and opera as a pretext for singing.

The student of music soon discovers, however, that there is a curious coincidence between a flourishing musical culture and active operatic life. In fact, ever since the seventeenth century the great musical nations have been those which fostered opera, whereas some of the others, such as England and the Netherlands, which hitherto were in the front rank, fell behind when they failed to adopt and to understand opera.

It is a fairly well known fact that opera in this country is monopolized by a minority which claims to be the ordained custodian of this high art. We shall have an opportunity to discuss this queer state of affairs, but first of all we must consider the basic question: what is opera? This is not an easy task, for the literature on opera is negligible—aside from the more or less silly stories about operas and singers. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to attack the problem directly, and I should like to approach it through a parallel, the case of the book illustrator, which, while not exactly identical, comes close to it in principle.

The illustrator of a book does not want to translate the text exactly, for between word and picture there is no such parellelism as exists even between different langauges. Not only does a picture express ideas in a different manner, it expresses different ideas. The writer relates the feelings, thoughts, and speech of his characters,

the illustrator renders the facial expressions, gestures, and corporeal attitudes of those same characters and in doing so illuminates their nature. Thus the illustrator is not only a translator of the writer's work, he completes it, for he speaks where the writer remains silent, he is heard where words fail. However, this state of things places the illustrator in a dilemma: can he complement the author's work entirely according to the latter's intentions? More precisely, can he show exactly what the text, within its verbal limitations, intended to express and in the manner intended? This would be impossible. No matter how hard he tries to adhere to his author's intentions, the illustrator will still appear as his own self, his drawing will be his own art and will differ essentially from the vision of the writer. But we might go even further, and conclude that since the writer has certainly said all he wanted to say, every addition to this is an illegitimate interference with his art, for it actually changes and distorts his creation. Now that is hard to believe, for it would destroy the fondest memories of one's childhood. What pleasure we all derived from picture books, looking at the pictures in anticipation of the story. Can these happy childhood memories, our first sensations of art, be fundamentally inartistic? What children enjoy so tremendously may be naive fable and poor drawing, but cannot be fundamentally wrong. And then we must remember how much the Middle Ages loved the illustrated book; the miniatures, the books of hours, the illuminated missals. They could not have sprung from inartistic sources. There must be a possibility for the illustrator to amalgamate, in a higher unity, all he receives and what he himself contributes. Thus the good illustrator will take the finished and organic creation of the author, and will place his own work beside it in such a manner that the unified result will be a third finished and organic creation.

A similar situation exists in opera. Opera is not "a play set to music," as the dictionaries like to define it, it is a play turned into music, created by music and drama working in conjunction, but a separate entity beyond them both. This makes quite a difference, and anyone who will take the trouble to compare Beaumarchais's "Marriage of Figaro" with Mozart's or Shakespeare's "Othello" with Verdi will readily see that these pairs of works are only distantly related. The plots are approximately the same, although in both instances the skilful librettists knew how to redesign the framework to suit a musical treatment, but the characters of the drama are entirely different, for they are shaped in music.

There is, then, a fundamental misconception in our approach to opera, for opera is not a variety of the spoken drama adorned with music, but an art form that has its own esthetic, dramaturgy, and conventions. As long as we insist on judging it either by purely literary or purely musical criteria we shall not understand it. All the ham acting, amateurish stage business, senseless cutting and rearranging of the score, arbitrary recasting of old libretti can be ascribed to this fundamental ignorance of the nature of opera. It is an autonomous art which calls for specific techniques of administration and performance. The librettist must know these esthetics and techniques, as must the stage director, who cannot be a mere regisseur; the composer must understand the difference between declaiming in music and creating characters in music; the con-

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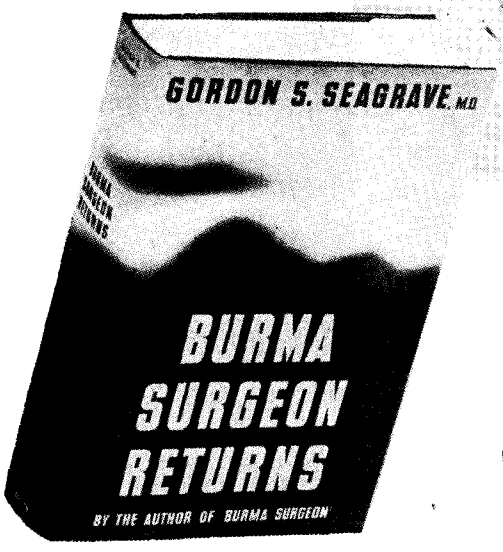

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W·W·NORTON & COMPANY · 70 Fifth Ave., N.Y. 11 ***"BOOKS THAT LIVE"***

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THE book reading public has been led to believe that Intelligence Officers are super-detectives, capable of solving murders which have the police baffled. I sincerely hope that everyone who finds himself confronted by a mystery won't call on a friend who was in the Navy Intelligence to solve it. He may merely find his Naval friend able to read Japanese, censor mail, or interpret aerial photographs.

Fortunately for *Ted Mather*, when he was suspected of murdering his beautiful and amoral wife *Celeste*, his SOS to *Commander Rick Vanner USN* (Intelligence) wasn't futile. *Rick* found that *Celeste* was a woman no other woman liked, no man could leave alone, and that she had acquired debts of passion and money which death had stepped in to meet. **MURDER CANCELS ALL DEBTS** is a departure from M. V. HEBERDEN'S usual stories and is a biting social satire as well as a tensely active whodunit. The wealthy, superficial, self-centered group of people who loved or hated *Celeste*, are vividly contrasted with the Naval Officer on leave, who solves the crime.

* * *

MURDER STRIKES AN ATOMIC UNIT is set with faithful realism in the research laboratories of an eastern university where a group of brilliant scientists are working on the problem of U-235 as part of our national race to beat the Nazis for the atom bomb. *Dr. Jeffrey McNeill* was acting as Intelligence Officer of the Atomic Unit. *Jeff* and *Anne McNeill* find there is a probable leak of the vital information from among the group to enemy agents, and *Ames Auger's* sudden death is connected with this leak.

Suspicion and fear split the Unit *long before the Unit splits the atom.* THEODORA DU BOIS has written a suspenseful story filled with frustrated amour, professional jealousy, and the needed secrecy surrounding the atomic research.

* * *

Just two invalided Marines are needed to help *Susan Marquette* untangle the unexplained death of her uncle *James* and the confused legacy of a bankrupt de luxe hotel. **SUSANNA, DON'T YOU CRY** by MARY PLUM is recommended reading.

ductor cannot limit himself to keeping his ensemble together; the singers must realize that they cannot depend on the larynx only, and most of all, the management must be aware of its role, which is not that of running a third-rate theatre exonerated by good singing.

The Metropolitan Opera House seems to have little conception of all this, and as long as they dictate the fashions in opera, abetted by press and radio commentators, the country as a whole—obviously fond of this form of art—will have no access to opera. There is no earthly reason why opera should not be made available to the people, but the approach will have to be entirely different. Useless, and often offensive, broadcasts between the acts, and puerile opera quizzes are now offered to enlighten the public. This is unworthy of our music lovers and is a sad surrender to the current methods of advertising employed by food and soap manufacturers. If the intermissions cannot be used more intelligently, let us rather have the straight commercial plug of the sponsoring manufacturer, or baseball scores, for what the public needs is not gossip and shop talk but good performances by properly trained ensembles, led not by people who mention Caruso while rolling their eyes, but by persons who realize that we are approaching the middle of the twentieth century, who know what opera stands for, and who appreciate that they are not guarding a musical safety-deposit box but have a mission to carry out to make a great art available to the nation.

There are many good elements in the Metropolitan—the management cannot altogether be blamed for certain social and other conventions which are so ingrained that nothing short of complete reorganization can bring about a change. But the ignorance of our times, of modern methods of opera production—let alone modern opera itself—is unforgivable. Opera is much more advanced in Europe, loud claims to the contrary notwithstanding, and since decentralization, the most urgent need of operatic development in America, is prevented by the indefensible belief that only the Metropolitan represents a true artistic standard, we are left with an obsolescent institution touted as the one and only model. If the Metropolitan insists in holding forth with its faded Victorian splendor behind its new gold curtain, it is hoped that some way will be found to start opera anew, and start it from the twentieth century. PAUL HENRY LANG.

The Soldier Who Lived Through the War

By Howard Nemerov

HE sat in a dusty house, and on the shelf
At any sound downstairs, the odd glassware
Would shiver nervously. There did he try
To compose a personal music, an old tune?

He said: I am the relic I, that stood
Where the curling high shock broke, testified
That fragile gewgaws in a storm withstand
Better than buildings the metal violence.

I am such bric-a-brac that once by luck
Outfaced my plaintiff and maligning fate
(As impudence assumed that I was meant)—
And now receive the queer surprise of life.

At fruit in the lacquered bowl, at the tall jug,
At all cool shapes I have stared an hour and more:
I seek a relevance, as anyone would seek,
A bitter imagining of tall buildings.

O husk, O hollow shell, recession of
The intimate: that rhetoric is dead;
The weather of that soul has changed. I must
Perhaps tell pointless stories of the war,

Or keep the silence of my house until
One day exploding with a useless power
I may say, it was like this exactly, like that,
Boom Boom, and saying this, at a great age, die.

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Big Ben

A BENJAMIN FRANKLIN READER. Edited by Nathan G. Goodman. Illustrations by Fritz Kredel and R. D. Palacios. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1945. 818 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

FEW indeed are the persons who can possess a set of Franklin's collected works, whether in the Bigelow or the Smyth edition. Both are out of print, rarely found in bookshops, and costly when discovered. Of course everybody can have a copy of Franklin's autobiography in one of its innumerable editions. But that is not enough; it leaves untouched his most important ideas and some of his most delightful writings. What then is the plain man who wants a good representative selection from Franklin's works to do?

The answer is, Buy this book. It is a bargain (well over eight hundred large and well-printed pages for $3.50) that would have appealed to Franklin's own heart. It contains practically everything that the ordinary reader or student could want: the autobiography, the best scientific papers, the most interesting general essays, a well-chosen group of religious papers, a full hundred pages of political writings, the little-read "Reflections on Courtship and Marriage," and a full body of letters, including a number never before published. Of course there is no end to the Franklin matter that is worth having and reading. It would be easy to suggest additional items that might have been put in—and one does miss the graphic and historically valuable account by Franklin of his meetings with Lord Chatham, for example. But in general a better compilation could not have been made. The book, too, is well ordered. Its contents have not been thrown in chronologically, which would mean haphazardly, but have been grouped under general headings. Franklin thus appears as editor and publisher, as promoter of the general welfare, as practical scientist, as humorist, as colonial agent, as diplomatist, and not least importantly, as family man writing to wife and children. To the whole Mr. Goodman, who has made himelf an authority upon Franklin the Inventor, prefixes a judicious biographical essay.

A special word should be said of the illustrations, which present Franklin's birthplace, his press, his bookshop, his electrical apparatus, his fire place, his magic squares, his scientific diagrams, and some excellent facsimiles of letters.

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That flesh is softer stuff than steel?
That not alone with swords and guns
Earth is harrowed for brave sons?
That better gods than wheels and stones
Built the sculptures round men's bones?
That all the breadth of sea and sky
Narrows to one human cry?"

"A hundred thousand years from now
Upon this rocky hill
The goldenrod will break the sod
And Jack will mate with Jill.

The sun will wake the robins
To flood the earth with song,
But for such simple happiness
Why must men wait so long?"

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HARPER

Sonnets

By John Frederick Nims

CAPE COD

HERE is the postcard land on every side:
Each shutter on the undulant shingle poses;
Over the camel dunes and ice-blue tide
The cumulus hangs unfolding like white roses.
Each corner of the sky a flourish of gull
Motifs; each bay a boat with canvas steeple;
Up alleys peaked and shingled, louvered tall,
Wander in skipper-togs the printed people.

Men of the umber flats or obstinate highlands,
Grudge nothing: photo beauty is paper-thin:
Schooners explode among the summer islands;
Each village bears the graveyard's stony grin.
These men are fellow in fate: skimp, suffer, plan,
And limp with the terrible dignity of man.

PROVINCETOWN

Over the studded wharves and timber alleys
Gulls in the splendid heaven cry like cats;
Trellis of rope and nest of twittering pulleys
Shadow of the copper brine of rotund vats.
Ocean is infinite-colored here at noon:
Bronze in the shallow, casing weed or spoil;
Plum at the edge of sky or freckle dune;
Under the piling, heavy-green as oil.

The hours go by like avenue girls at Easter,
But life is briny, booted, with cut hands.
Seamen in orange plaid and leathery master
Clump barrel-footed on the cameo sands,
Curse, clamber, haul and tauten, gamble, die,
Caught in the orient scissor, wave and sky.

FIR TREE

Inland, the region of the stunted fir.
A sinewy cripple, grim, with knotted stare;
Its bark abrupt with turtle-shell and spur
And rough with the quills of porcupine for hair.
Wailing on every dune, the angry clan
Clutches debris in fingers ash and wry.
Its posture dear to colorist of Japan,
It shakes a shaggy luster on the sky.

Sardonic too, bearing for fruit or blossom
A crude and fatuous hoax, the wooden cone.
Men buy it as oddity, like shell or possum,
Keep it on wall, with canes and pennants shown,
Or knotted among the cocoa vines and rocks
Hang it in silly jungle of cuckoo clocks.

END OF VACATION

From pines, the firedogs of excited sea,
I part reluctantly, like cordage tearing,
Wrapped in the tatters of salt memory
Fierce as a pennon in this weather flaring.
Wanting, through lenses of the pendulous tide,
The raggedy hardware of the oceanfloor;
Wanting the dunes of autumn, easel-pied,
And shack of painter jaunty on the shore.

Back to the shuttle country, sheer New York,
I carry the tourists' flotsam, cards and flags,
Bayberry candles and the floats of cork
(Shreds of the great peninsula in bags)
And tangled with kelp and hawser, hardly whole,
Haul like a net my green and driftwood soul.

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They Ran Japan

JAPAN'S WAR ECONOMY. By T. A. Bisson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1945. 267 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by
BRIG. GEN. DONALD ARMSTRONG

MR. BISSON'S carefully documented study of Japanese political, economic, and military organization and methods from 1937 to 1945 results in a surprising conclusion. Contrary to the general belief in this country, the inference is inescapable that it was by no means the generals and admirals who controlled Japanese policy, but rather the seven or eight great business monopolies which dominated the ruling coalition. The importance of this point is obvious. The removal of the militarists will not end the potential threat of Japanese resurgence as a menace to world peace. Steps must be taken to prevent the perpetuation of the stranglehold on the Japanese economy of these monopolists if we are not to face once more the old pattern of Japanese aggression.

Mr. Bisson, long a student of Japan's political and economic policies, examines that nation's legislative measures for her economic mobilization in the late war and indicates some of the causes of her failure of accomplishment.

The legislation adopted by Japan recognized the factors of mobilization for war—morale, labor, power, material supplies, machinery, and capital funds—but it failed to provide suitable direction and management. Premier Tojo, although concurrently Minister of War and Minister of Munitions and possessing great power in the Cabinet, could not secure the required production.

The vested interests of the various ministries and the non-coöperation of private industry, which retained some control over distribution, were so great that the National Planning Board, although fully supported by the Premier and the army, failed to achieve administrative coördination. The author's interpretation of the causes of failure to secure competent administration is based upon political actions and is convincing.

Mr. Bisson describes clearly and concisely the strength and weaknesses of the government and its legislation. Students of Japan's economy will find that this book presents such factual material as will enable them better to understand the probable causes of her surrender, and the real dangers to the United States unless remedial measures with respect to the business oligarchy are adopted.

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(*Continued from page* 13)

self shortly after to the Library of Congress at Washington, and I more or less automatically inherited the class. There was little that was automatic about it, unless the exhilaration of a congenial job, much work, and ardor ever increasing can be thus described; and a class increasing in size and poetic fluency. Oh, yes, and decidedly, I found that one "could teach poetry."

How? That is another question I am frequently asked. How do I conduct my "Poet's Workshop"—for this engaging little nickname became its

more or less official title, finding its way to the Registrar's Office and the registration-slips required by the applicants to my class.

The Workshop really seems to conduct itself, together with the active coöperation of student and teacher—and that magic other thing, the "bequest of wings," as only Emily herself could name it, the study of verse. The poems of my students are first read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested, by me; then read aloud and discussed in class. Perhaps the criticism of a sonnet will lead to a fuller talk on sonnet-writing, and the reading of a group of poems in that exalted form, to illustrate a point—and how more poignantly and convincingly? The room is hushed as the poems of the class are read—how intent is every listener—and I am reminded of a group of medical students gathered around an operating-table. The decision of the scalpel is not more important, it would seem, than the word concerning the welfare of the poem. "I repeat," says Siegfried Sassoon, "without clarified construction and technical control, no poetical communication can be effective."

The Laws of Verse. And after the Laws are fairly mastered, if they ever are, what then? Perhaps not much. Surely something. If nothing else, a clearer and a happier sense of what verse really is; and why. The perception of the more equipped surges forward; the less receptive, the humbler, will nevertheless be the richer in understanding; the poetry-lover will love it the more, accepting in time the mournful fact that poetry-writing is not for him or her. And that indeed is something. There are thousands of boys and girls learning to play a beloved chosen musical instrument. Few of them will attain the concert platform. All of them are well aware of why the eminent artist is justly eminent. They will appreciate every triumphant note; they *know* that sonata; they have played it themselves. The student of verse will be closer to the poem, will appreciate more intimately and deeply the ineffable line. He also senses, a little wistfully perhaps, why the sonnet he is reading is the imperishable thing it is; he has studied verse-writing, he has written sonnets himself.

Nor is it necessary, in my class, to bring a poem (or a sheaf of poems) each week—although they usually do. I urge a rewritten, better-written poem in preference to the newer one, on the principle of there being more rejoicing in heaven over a poem that repenteth; I recommend the "mull-

The Atolls

By Starr Nelson

MU, ancient mother of the Phoenix Isles,
Of Guam, Tarawa, and the Carolines,
Dreams under the airy roots of the screw pines;
Her bubbled bones the blown ocean swells,
She is dreaming her coral dream of the radiant fall—
The meteor spinning sea-ward, the golden bud
That blossomed flame and sea-foam in her blood.
She is earth that is lost forever, is the atoll.

Gone are the angels and white fawns of Mu;
The fiery visitant within her breast
Split wild Elysium into mortal hells.
Yet how he sings the spheres into her dust!—
Oh, who would listen now to sad sea-shells,
Or sleepy mermaids combed off Ngulu?

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ing over"; and I tell my listeners of a remark of Padraic Colum's: "Do not let your poem walk too soon on the page, lest it get bandy legs." There are too many bowlegged poems running about. Nor, when I pronounce a poem "good," does it signify that it is ready for the editorial staff of a leading magazine. It only means that it is excellent class-work and that I am pleased. Occasionally I ask for a copy of the poem, "to keep." This is considered a distinction, and I intend it to be. The Workshop is a lighthearted and slightly unpredictable little group, though none the less earnest and diligent. One bright young man brings me an apple and lays it genially on my desk. Another asks "where the rose is," it being my habit to pin on a flower.

"The architecture of verse," as Louis Untermeyer calls it, is studied and stressed: patterns, forms, rhythms; rhyme and its many variations, and how the expert poet employs, and enjoys, these; the French and the Italian forms and how they are used in English. "Death to the adjective!" cried Robert Louis Stevenson, meaning of course its *over*-use, one of the more blatant faults of the inexperienced writer. "Nouns and verbs are almost pure metal," is the wise comment of Marie Gilchrist: "adjectives are cheaper ore," she adds. (And adverbs, I insist, that adjective of the verb.) But the adjective can be pure metal too, and I recall a few: Yeats's "man's own resinous heart," Browning's flash of the brush, the "mild and magnificent eye" of Wordsworth, and Dorothy Wellesley's donkey's "immoderate ears;" Keats's "alien corn," Marvell's "curious peach."

There is so much to talk about in the Workshop, punctuation and grammar become impassioned, spelling seems a graceful thing; to be exact has naught to do with pedantry or dogma, surely, nor the stern exclusion of inversion and other tenets and characteristics of old "poetic" language—what I call the *"ah me!* school." I often bring a new poet to class, I mean, his "slender volume," or a forgotten, too long-neglected, older poet. Or I bring an anthology, for a brief glimpse into the hearts, the flights, of a group of poets. I believe in anthologies, although I know it is only a glimpse. And we read the published letters of poets, always absorbing, often revealing as regards their own verse; and sometimes I bring edifying and witty reviews, and

NOTES FOR POETRY READERS . . .

Prairie City, Illinois is quite a ways from New York City; it's a little town, and the cornfields knife dangerously close to the business section. A casual visitor would hardly think that Prairie City was, to quote the Providence *Journal*, "fast becoming the poetry publishing center of the country."

Starting out with a hand press about seven years ago, we have progressed to slightly more impressive equipment; but we have not changed our ideas about publishing good poetry in well-made books, nor have we altered in our desire that each book we publish shall reflect the personal, non-metropolitan work that goes into their making.

We like publishing poetry here in Prairie City . . . the only thing we don't like about it is that, far from the metropolitan centers and without the means or desire to do lavish advertising, our books may not come to the attention of many readers who might like to own some of them. SRL's Poetry Number seemed a most appropriate medium for getting in touch with some of these readers.

There are books on our list to suit almost every taste in poetry, from the traditional to the experimental: there are two collections of poems by Edgar Lee Masters . . . *Illinois Poems* and *Along the Illinois*. August Derleth appears on our list three times, with his *Selected Poems* in 1944, and last year, *The Edge of Night*. Such critics as Masefield, MacLeish and Brooks have praised the poems in Boris Todrin's *At the Gates*. The Book-of-the-Month Club recommended this book, as well as Ruth Lechlitner's *Only the Years* and Clark Mills' *The Circus*. William Rose Benét, writing in SRL a while ago, particularly liked *Unweave a Rainbow*, by Amanda Benjamin Hall. In the field of experimental writing, there are three volumes by Selwyn S. Schwartz, a young Chicago poet, whose latest collection, *Preface to Maturity*, is really a book for the connoisseur. Louis Zukofsky, controversial leader of the Objectivist school has written, *Anew*. *Swing It High Sweet Saxophones* is a collection of poems by George Kayton, a Florida band leader. There are quite a few other outstanding volumes, too, by Winfield Townley Scott, C. F. MacIntyre, Gilbert Maxwell, John Russell McCarthy, Norman Macleod, Harry Roskolenko, Eleanor Glenn Wallis, Reitza Dine Wirtschafter, Dorothy Cooper, A. M. Sullivan, Carlos Bulosan, William Everson, Edward N. Horn, Florence Hamilton, Hubert Creekmore, and others. Tom Boggs has edited a distinguished little collection (never before in anthology form) titled, *An American Anthology*.

Of course we like to sell any of our books, but we particularly like to sell those by poets not yet widely known. Our list of forthcoming titles leans heavily to these "young and unrecognized" poets (most of whom are already well known in the little magazines, scholarly journals, etc.). Among these is Lawrence Olson, just out of the Navy, whose first book is *The Cranes on Dying River*, which may be the outstanding book on our 1946 list. Joy Hausmann has translated for us a generous selection of the work of the French poet, Francis Jammes. Lorine Niedecker has written *New Goose*; Syd Turner is writing *This Side of Granite*; *Days of Dust* are distinguished sonnets by Louis Valentine, *The Feast*, quatrains by Alexis Beyz, illustrated by Philip Moore; *In Old Carmelo*, a narrative poem by Alice Ball. Jay Roderic de Spain covers the race question frankly and honestly in *Black Hibiscus*; Anne Van Ness Brown has written *Open Windows*; Isabel Harriss Barr, *The Ship of Glass*; Mary Atwater Taylor, *Turn of the Year*. We have so many really fine books of poetry scheduled for publication this Spring and Summer that we can't even mention them all—books by Vincent Ferrini, David Ignatow, Cloyd Mann Criswell, Helen Gorn Sutin, Luther Patrick, Mary N. S. Whiteley, George Anthony, Glen Baker, Basil Burwell, Lucile Coleman, Thomas Christopher, George Kaufmann, Louis Lovelace, Marsha Allen, Jack Southworth, Bernard Walleck, and many others. We must take space to mention *Song from the High Hills*, an eloquent restatement of the American Dream by Donald Chester Ewing, and Alan Swallow's first book-length collection, *The Remembered Land*.

You can see why we don't do this sort of advertising very often; too many of our poets are not yet famous enough to catch the casual reader's fast-moving eye. Yet the work of each is of such merit that we accepted his or her manuscript from among the hundreds we receive. We have printed a Catalog & Checklist of our books in a very limited edition, and probably we won't have enough copies to go around; but if you are seriously interested in our books and would like to become better acquainted with them, we will be glad to send you a copy of this list. Better yet, ask your bookseller for one or more of the books mentioned above. Because books of poetry are, unfortunately, a poor sales risk for most booksellers, he may not have it on his shelves—but he'll order it for you. We'd like for you to see some of our books.

The Press of James A. Decker

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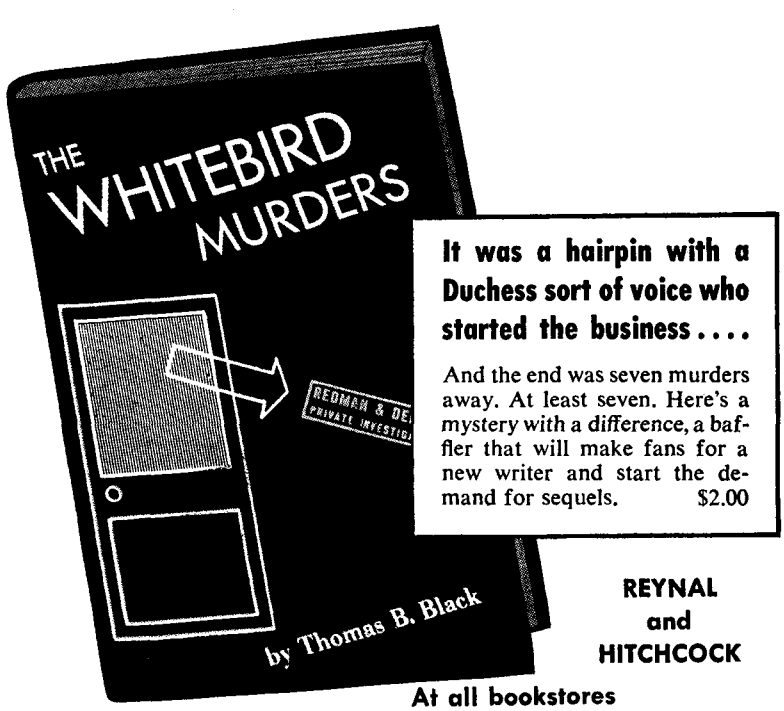
books of poetic criticism written by brilliant contemporary men and women of letters. I quote from them —I quote a good deal in my talks— I have sought to suppress the tendency in these pages (more or less successfully); indeed I admit I do like to call upon my radiant cloud of witnesses to back me up, saying the thing *I* would say, and saying it so much more eloquently. And I urge my class to *read* more verse both classic and modern; I believe they do read some of the books we have nibbled at together—I see them making copious notes—and I tell them of one exceedingly prolific young poet who remarked loftily that "he hadn't time to read—*he wrote:*" having admitted with complete detachment that he did not recall the author of "Dover Beach," which had somehow loomed into the conversation. "I *write,*" he repeated, that being his contribution toward literature—and sufficient. "So did the other fellow," was the succinct comment of a bespectacled little man standing by.

The obscure, versus the profound, the cliché and the over-rare word, clarity as opposed to the commonplace. Aristotle said it, so long ago— but I refrain, though with difficulty, from quoting his superb summing-up of this highly controversial topic, seething apparently among the poets of his far day, as in ours. And the class writes its poems; sometimes really writes! I do not praise inordinately, but I do not think that too severe comment is good teaching. I remember what that master-pedagogue, Leopold Auer, once said to me: "Do not send a pupil away discouraged. Break the violin over his head! Tear his music to shreds! But send him away saying, 'I was bad today, yes; but I will be good next lesson!' That is teaching." A friend tells me of a happening in his English Class at Harvard. "Barlow," remarks Professor

L—, "you have written a pretty good poem—a *pretty good* poem—" Barlow sits up—"but remember, Barlow, always remember, that a pretty good poem is like a pretty good egg."

What is this impelling thing, this force, that is bringing so many hundreds of the returning service men to the universities, to the classes of English? They flock to Columbia. They have invaded my quiet little corner, my Workshop runneth over—I have two workshops now. They "started writing," these young men tell me, at the front; in the jungles, on the beaches, during the night-watches on ships. In hospitals. A great deal of what they bring me is only emotional release, what I call "private poems," but some of it is more. Occasionally I am startled to find among the welter of words a fire smouldering, a true flame. And none of it is "ivory tower" verse. These men are writing about something they were living. Bleeding. And I am glad to be close to it, involved in it. And how serenely they take my criticism, not all of it indulgent. They do not seem to mind. They know what they are writing about, at least what they want to say. One Seebee, after quite a dressing-down, looks at me with positive admiration. "Gee," he remarks, as if to himself, "that's *swell.*" And I am curiously abashed; he has lived the poem, I can only suggest how he can tell it—a little more glibly. And I remember a story of a poet-friend: she had been reading some verses of the pretty-good-egg variety; she had been too kind to the quivering young author at her side. "I *couldn't* tell him," she whispered to me in a corner, "it would be like stepping on a kitten." (Beloved Rose O'Neill.) But these kittens are very tough, very resilient. I have never felt a bone give way; their nine lives are all of nine in the class-room. They can take it. And profit by it. And so, it occurs to me, can I.

Swinging from my strap in the subway, returning from Columbia, books slithering from my grasp, I reflect: "What wondrous life is this I lead! Ripe apples drop about my head . . ." "What did that woman say?" a girl swaying next to me asks her friend. "Something about apples—" and they look at me . . . Well, poetry is meant to be read aloud.



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Return to New Mexico

By Witter Bynner

A THING
Which is greater than thought
Is what we have bought
With our imagining:
The crown becomes the king,
The mitre becomes the pope,
The halo falls from hope,
As man gives way to thing.

God, but the stars do reach down!
They are not like New York stars
Nor does Santa Fe feel like a town
Amid atomic wars.
The desert comes through the front door
And the whole house fills
With presence I have felt before,
This cleanness of high hills.
Clean, clean, that's the thing,
Clean beyond brain or purse!
I feel from a bird's atomic wing
A chain that lifts the curse.
So put it here, you starry ray,
And I will put it there,
A handshake between night and day
In this dissolving air.

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Human Waste

WRITTEN ON THE WIND. By Robert Wilder. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1946. 338 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by LEONARD AMSTER

IN spite of an introductory note to the effect that none of the characters in this book has reason to be identified with any living person, Robert Wilder's dramatis personae call more than casually to mind a celebrated case of the thirties in which a Broadway actress was exonerated of the death of her millionaire husband. It is a fetid wind that blows from the morass, of which Mr. Wilder writes, in which the heirs of the tobacco king, Andrew Whitfield, live the only breath of sweetness being stirred by the outsider from the New York stage. Domiciled on The Hill, that like them towers above and intimidates the town which it has bred, the son of old Andrew and his wife, both well-disposed and ineffectual people, watch with consternation as their son and daughter grow up to be the "stinker" and "bitch" that they characteristically and accurately call each other.

It is too simple to say that money and leisure alone can produce such anti-social and thoroughly self-destroying individuals as Cary and Ann-Charlotte. The author's cursory explanation, that "Andrew had . . . built well with his hands. Only his loins had failed him," and that it was because the lesser of Andrew's two sons has continued the line, is not a sufficient explanation of his characters. However, though Mr. Wilder does not come to grips with his problem, he tells his story of human waste and dereliction with raciness and inexorability. The wastrel Whitfields, though they may be less dignified and less numerous, are as much a social problem as the Joads. Reese, son of a neighboring sharecropper and boyhood friend of Cary, who becomes an heir and member of the household on The Hill as a possible ameliorating influence, submits, too, to a way of life whose advantages are cancelled out by inescapable penalties. Although he has a kind of integrity, it does not keep him from sinking into the same morass of surfeit and indolence; but he does manage to hold his head above the muck for which Cary and Ann-Charlotte seem to have an affinity. The latter is cold, contrived, and cynical, whereas Cary battens on everyone about him and, when left to himself, finds annihilation in the liquor that all but pours from the pages.

For the first time in several years, there are several books of verse on our list. They are

Freedom's Farm

by Josephine Young Case, author of

At Midnight on the 31st of March;

North and South

by Elizabeth Bishop, winner of the Houghton Mifflin Company Poetry Fellowship Award;

Dr. Johnson's Waterfall

by Helen Bevington;

and **The Faultless Shore**

by Edward Weismiller.

Publication dates will be announced later.

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". . . this is true poetry. Just as many painters including Van Gogh see color Maria Lorenzini seems to hear words when she listens to music."
—MRS. M. C. SLOSS, KYA.

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—ARTHUR PRICE, S. F. Examiner.

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MEANING IN MODERN POETRY

(Continued from page 6)

that have been perpetuated in many of our institutions of learning are almost as outmoded. Its elements have been taught as if they were discrete entities, instead of processes. Processes change with people.

Simile, metaphors, and symbols, like the parts of speech, came into being before they were formularized. They are there to be used or discarded in whatever way suits the individual poet's requirements. Their function is to express differing degrees of intensity in the relations felt to exist between apparently unrelated items of experience.

There is nothing elaborate about them except as the poet may choose to elaborate them, to make them

more consonant with his feelings, to infuse new life into otherwise trite devices. There is no law regulating their length, number or frequency; it all depends on whether the poet succeeds in what he sets out to do.

Mr. Hillyer referred, in his article, to a "succession of mixed metaphors" in a passage from "The Atoll in the Mind," by Alex Comfort:

Out of what calms and pools the cool shell grows
dumb teeth under clear waters, where no currents
fracture the coral's porous horn

Grows up the mind's stone tree, the honeycomb,
the plump brain coral breaking the pool's mirror,
the ebony antler, the cold sugared fan.

Whatever metaphors there may be here, they are completely incidental and would certainly not be improved by turning them, as Mr. Hillyer suggested, into similes. There is a new device at work. The arrangement throughout of words referring to shells, coral, and sea-forms indicates not only a visual resemblance between them and the structure of man, but a substantial identity. This, reinforced by the knowledge that all life originated in the sea, conveys a sensation of "thoroughgoing relatedness." The poet does not say, "My body is (or is like) a shell." He presents a shell-body, body-shell configuration; a concentric relationship. The impulse is *like* that that goes into a simile, metaphor, or symbol, but the wave-length is different.

A "mixed" relationship, on the other hand, is one in which incongruous elements are unintentionally introduced, as in: "The violent swing to materialism crashed into the stone wall of the present war. The pendulum rebounds, half-shattered and unbalanced. There is no spiritual asylum . . ."

I see the exposed works of a grandfather's clock beating time too near a fence of Connecticut fieldstone; a very surrealist effect. I doubt very much that Mr. Hillyer intended this. You might find accidents of this sort in almost anyone's writing. That's not the point. The point is that calling a deliberately rapid change of metaphor "mixed" is imputing unconscious humor to conscious experiment; it is not stating a case.

The danger in classifications is that we get to thinking things actually fit into them. When the discrepancy becomes too apparent, our reflex is to deny, not the classification, but the validity and very existence of the discordant item. Thus dissonance in modern music is imputed to ignorance of "the rules of harmony."

When E. E. Cummings writes, "Spring is like a perhaps hand," he has not forgotten that "perhaps" is customarily an adverb. He has given it a double function: to describe precisely the tentative quality of spring and at the same time convey the elusive feelings it inspires.

In expressing modern life, its speed, its incongruities, poets have discovered new relationships, symbolic puns, devices of association and juxtaposition, half-rhymes, and broken rhythms. Sometimes these devices are expressive, sometimes merely intricate. It is always pertinent to indicate which one thinks they are, and why. New forms are just as much in danger of becoming cliches as the forms cherished by academicians. This too is legitimate grounds for

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criticism, just as it is always to the point to spot the influences under which any poet, young or old, is working. And conversely, if one can, to recognize his idiom.

When we approach modern poetry with the attention we give developments in mechanics and physics we discover that conceptions similar to those that have revolutionized thinking in the sciences are also at work in the arts; that there are basic connections between some of the time-space formulations of physics, "faceted Cubism," modern harmonics, and the composite symbols of "Finnegans Wake."

Even those experiments which we may finally, upon mature consideration, come to regard as unsuccessful in themselves will, we may find, have sharpened our perceptions and our appreciations. Not only will we be more knowledgeably aware of the more fortunate productions of our time, but we will have gained additional insights into the great works that are now treasures from the past.

At a certain point the arts cease to be competitive. This is when, without losing relevance to their own age, they become timeless. But this effect of eternity has a temporal qualification. If we lose the immediate significance of a work of art, we are less likely to grasp its universal application.

An inability to comprehend the relationship of a modern work to the age in which we live casts doubt on our capacity for understanding past masterpieces, related as they are to ages in which we do not, except vicariously, participate.

What is usable in the past is not preserved by repetition. Conventions tend to deny tradition. Originality—the exploration of new forms, the discovery of new relationships—becomes tradition. By it the past, reinterpreted, is revivified. And the present, too, is seen to be, not a collection of relics, but a continuing evolution.

Three Sonnets

By Edwin Rolfe

AT the moment of victory he examines his own
heart. The gun-barrel's cool but the fires still leap
upward from the conquered field, and from his brain
the heat flares in circles and he cannot sleep.
Turbulent and tamed, he remembers those other
countries which are neither victors nor defeated:
those countries of maps and molecules, withered
under neutral sun. Bemedalled and fêted,
he returns to his land-locked starting-point, conscious
he has been well-used, like a finely trained stallion.
Now that he's free to graze again, he munches
his cud of applause; but he knows for every million
creatures and men now liberated, other
millions remain under fieldstones, white and smothered.

He remembers the fevers, the symptoms of disease.
The electrocardiographic brain records
the preordained murders, the handsome mercenaries
of the corrupt madman and his shrieking words.
And if he is fortunate he will store away
like winter clothes in mothballs the expedient devices:
how to kill with the heel of the hand, and how
to twist the bayonet and throttle dangerous voices.
Devoutly, with all his soul, he hopes—
echoing the diplomats—for a modus vivendi
wherein paths lead peaceward and living shapes
all deeds and words, not only sermons on Sunday.
But the poker chips of profit and of loss,
piled high on the pulpit, hide the preacher's face.

He knows, at last, good will is not enough,
complacency a fraud, and that the Golden Rule,
given without measure, can split the deceptive staff
the shepherd leans on, and make a man a tool
in any scoundrel's hand and brain, so finally
he can be shaped to murder or to war:
with all the goodness in the world he soon may be
senseless, corrupted, malevolent as fire—
until the boast *Les hommes de bon volonté*
dies on his chattering lips as he recalls
how all the causes he espoused, existed by,
went singly to their deaths, leaving identical wills
and warnings: without strength and purest purpose, they
ask only for betrayal: *Les hommes* sans *volonté.*

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MASTERPIECES OF LITERATURE Vol 1. APPR. OF POETRY. (Ausp. Nat. Council Teachers of Engl., Robert C. Poole) Norman Corwin. Columbia E-5 (6 10") $3.75	Slightly heavy tone. Somewhat uneven. Corwin very close to mike. Not bad, not first rate.	B+	Good school and college type anthol. Eng. and Am. works, new and old. Corwin knows mike technique; his sincere interest in the poetry comes over. An excellent album for listening and education.
LEAVES OF GRASS (Whitman) Ralph Bellamy. Victor M 955 (4) $4.50	Reading rather uneven. Occasional peaks. Quality somewhat metallic.	B— Crackly (new pressings may be better)	Good selection, with implications for today. Interesting listening; has feeling, thanks to Bellamy's obviously genuine interest in Whitman.
THE FACE IS FAMILIAR Ogden Nash reading his own poems. DECCA 342 (3 10") $2.75 *(Still available some shops.)*	Good realism in spite of some unevenness and weak highs.	B+	Most amusing light verse of our time—excellent on records. Nash voice matches Nash poems—sophisticated, clever understatement. Decca should reissue this.
EDWIN MARKHAM HIMSELF "Man with the Hoe" and other poems. (Markham reading his own works) TIMELY 4 M (3) $6.50 Man with Hoe separately (1) $2	Remarkably realistic. Harsh, overloaded in spots.	B	Valuable documentary. *Cf.* "Man with Hoe" with Corwin reading above. Old rhetorical style, OK in person but impossible on records. Excellent ill. of bad mike technique. Useful for classwork in diction, radio, poetry.
WHITMAN, "BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS" Helen Hayes; chorus, orch. in: "MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY." Victor M 909 (2) $2.50	Professional studio performance. Realism, overall balance is excellent.	A—	Elaborate dramatic-musical superproduction. This technique should not be used on Whitman. Chorus, orchestral music in flagrantly bad taste. Hayes reading exaggerated, over-dramatic.
ALFRED KREYMBORG, The American Troubadour. Puppet Play Poems with mandalute accpt. ASCH 554 (3) $3.50	Voice well recorded, though highs weak. Mandalute beautifully clear; too loud for voice, in spots. (Some sides have no music.)	B crackly	For years a figure in American folk lore and poetry, Kreymborg's very unique spoken poems with music are excellent on records. Good irony in "Lima Beans," well read. Music is remarkably good, with considerable form and content. Original Americana.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT, editor of this Poetry Issue, is guest collaborator in the above review of poetry on records. The choice of material is Mr. Benét's own, and the comments in the right hand column are based on his oral criticisms of the records. We owe thanks to Margaret Shafer of Steinway and Sons Record Shop, who compiled the list of available material from which Mr. Benét made his choice, and who provided us with the actual records. Comments under the headings of balance, realism, and surface are mine.

The records reviewed do not constitute a survey but rather a choice of interesting items from the relatively few records now easily available. Recorded poetry is currently at a low ebb. A large part of the prewar material was forced out of print and very little of it has returned so far. A number of recordings that are officially available in the catalogues are actually impossible to get.

But during the next year or so many smaller companies, and, notably, the university recording services such as those of Harvard and New York universities, will be back, and we can expect a sizable flood of new material, along with a much improved standard of technical excellence.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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Two Poems

By Christopher Morley

Saguenay

PERFECT for geology or fable,
Black channel most like Lethe, or the Styx:
Passengers leave dice and cocktail table
To hear the steamer's horn play monkey-tricks.
Echo retards, reluctant, slow to mock;
Devoteds bead themselves when searchlights beam
On Mercy's image mortised in the rock.
Communicative ship, taciturn stream.

The cheerful pilots pride them who edge nearest;
In spite of gale athwart and cliff to lee
They give his money's worth the jocund tourist,
Yowling a klaxon at Eternity.
Excursions come to frolic, priests to pray—
Dark and indifferent is the Saguenay.

Three-star, Would I Were Steadfast

I HEARD him let his hair down in the bar;
He needed to, perhaps, for his morale:
"Listen, Babe, and I'm not jocular,
I'm through with corny fiction, it's banal,
And Lesbian best-sellers. Gal meets Gal!
I'm a poet really."
"Sweet, you *are*!"

"I'd like to write, stead . . . steadfast as a star
One sempiternal sonnet. And I shall."
"We better eat."
"Why spoil it? Two more brandies.
Gosh you're good to talk to."
And by now
Beneath the counter they were playing handies.
He eructated, and excused himself. . . .
Meanwhile, O steadfast sonnet, where art thou?
Still shining, in a bottle, on the shelf.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER STEALS THE SHOW *Lee Hirsch* (Frederick Fell: $2.)	Woman who runs amateur theatre near N. Y. shot in green room. Sgt. Jack Keff and psychiatrist Bart unravel puzzle.	Rather confused affair with some reasonably interesting character work and a far-flung plot. Police-narrator is bluffly amusing.	On foggy side
THE WHITEBIRD MURDERS *Thomas B. Black* (Reynal & Hitchcock: $2.)	Giles Redman, head of detective agency, strangled in office. His operative Delaney gets killer after wild goings-on.	White-slave traffic, crooked cops, "hairpins" of all sorts, copious blood letting, and hair-trigger action.	Toughest of the season
THE CRIMSON CAT MURDERS *Sydney A. Porcelain* (Phoenix: $2.)	Haverstraw matron, fearing violence, summons sleuth Clay to home. He, matron's missing husband and murder arrive about same time.	First two or three pages O. K. then it becomes amateurish and rather silly.	Nice large type

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC: NO. 626

DEFINITIONS

A. To distress; press hard; perplex (3 wds.)
B. A silly fellow.
C. Defeat of British Gen. Tarleton by American Gen. Morgan, Jan. 17, 1781.
D. One of Athene's appellations (3 wds.)
E. To guarantee.
F. A point of the compass.
G. Flat, thin diamond usually cut from an inferior stone, used in Hindu work.
H. The swordfish.
I. Small river in Selkirk Co., Scotland, celebrated by Wordsworth (2 wds.)
J. First name of heroine of "Felix Holt."
K. American historian; twice Pulitzer Prize winner; associated with Columbia Univ. (1890—).
L. Remote allusion to a person or thing not named.
M. Deteriorates (2 wds.)
N. A patch, usually black, formerly worn as an ornament.
O. Celebrated pack of hounds, dating from 18th cent., centered about Nuneaton, Eng. (with "The").
P. Sequel to "The Monastery" by Scott (with "The").
Q. Boundary "zone" in political science, etc., where distinctions are not clear.
R. "Gag" resolution (passed in the House, 1838; rescinded, 1844), tabling slavery petitions.
S. Condition of weariness.
T. Comedy by Shakespeare.
U. Christmas merrymakers in England.
V. In a manner fluent and suave.
W. The head; pate; brain (chiefly jocose).
X. To pounce as in the manner of a bird of prey (2 wds.)

WORDS

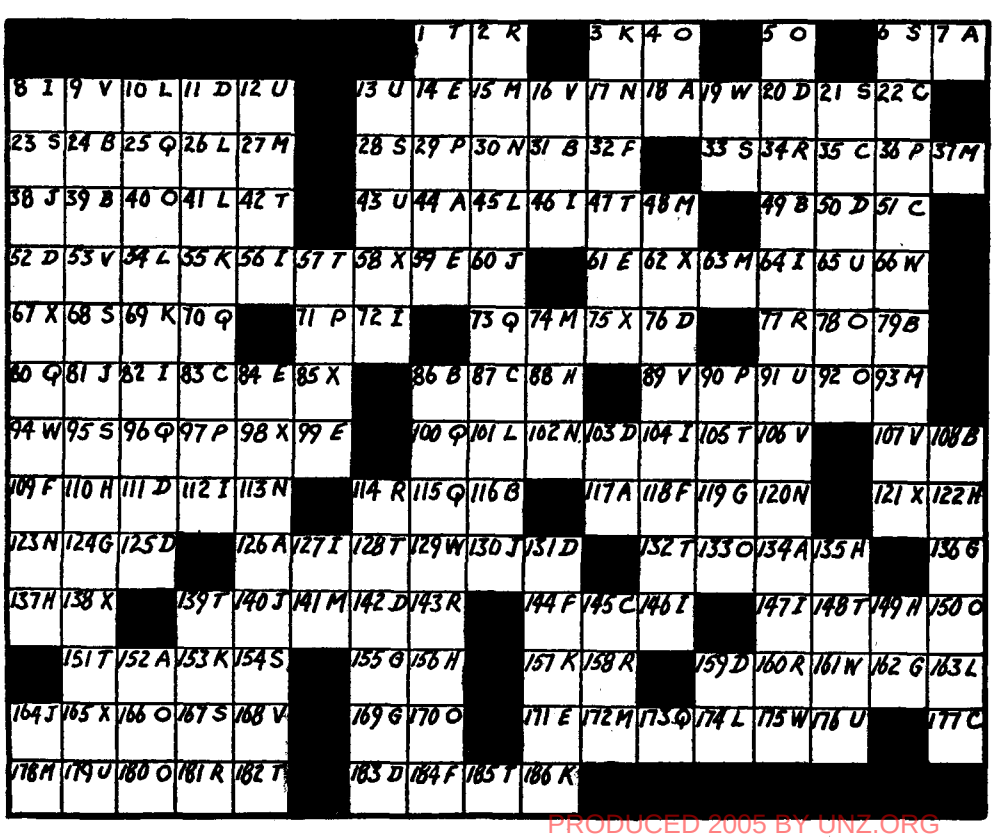
126 18 117 44 152 134 7
39 31 116 49 24 108 86 79
177 145 51 35 83 87 22
11 20 183 125 52 76 103 50 159 142 111 131
14 99 171 61 59 84
109 184 118 32 144
124 136 169 162 155 119
110 135 156 149 88 122 137
72 64 8 46 127 146 147 56 112 104 82
164 60 38 81 130 140
69 153 55 3 186 157
101 41 10 163 54 26 174 45
27 15 141 63 93 74 178 37 48 172
102 30 123 17 113 120
5 166 133 180 92 4 150 170 78 40
36 29 71 90 97
80 96 25 173 115 70 100 73
77 2 114 34 160 181 158 143
167 28 154 6 68 23 21 33 95
132 185 47 105 139 42 182 128 1 151 148 57
13 91 176 179 12 65 43
9 89 106 16 107 53 168
94 175 66 129 19 161
85 121 98 75 62 138 58 67 165

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 44 of this issue.



The Crostics Club

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

BY now those of you who have been sending SOS calls for Series #18 have it in your hands. Several letters have reached me asking why a friend was able to secure his copy in a New York bookshop on February 11th whereas *he* had not been able to secure his elsewhere by February 27th.

Those of you who have entered valid protests lately about the difficulty of working your DC on the page as now designed will be glad to learn that as the aftermath of an SRL conference of those concerned, the editors are at work on a new layout to make your puzzling a pleasure.

John Newberry relates an amusing DC incident. While awaiting a dinner guest at his desk as associate director of the Detroit Institute of Art, he started the current DC and left the magazine open at the place when his friend arrived. Next morning the puzzle was finished! It wasn't an archy who did it either but the night watchman on his rounds.

Theodore M. Leinbach, Reading, Pa., sheds more light on the spelling of "Erewhon," while at the same time extolling Butler's vision in thus foretelling "with such keen perception the impending havoc of the machine age": "In 'Webster's International' *wh* is thus described: 'A consonantal group, usually representing Anglo-Saxon, or Old English, initial *hw*.' It then refers to Paragraph 258 under *Pronunciation* where it indicates that during the Middle English period the *hw* became changed to *wh* and has remained this way ever since."

Among others heard from recently are: Cynthia Broth, again a student at Radcliffe after a seven years' interlude, now a veteran nurse and under the GI Bill of Rights; Rev. Paul Grimley Kuntz, Dennis Union Church, Cape Cod (wasn't that where Anna Howard Shaw won her spurs?), son-in-law of our Mrs. Joel Hunter, Evanston, Ill.; Cornelia Kellogg, Morristown, N. J., a friend of the late Mrs. Morgan Grinnell, N. Y., who used to hold Monday luncheons for DC-working by a small group of close friends to which I was, to my delight, occasionally admitted.

The cover of the weekly *Andover Townsman* for February 14th was a mellow-toned picture taken at the branch library at Ballardvale, Mass., in the background of which is our wizard, Steven Byington, standing with a book in his hands taken from the shelves.

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Then something happened. He had promised a long short story to *The British Weekly* by a certain date. Inspiration failed to come; only a few days remained. Then early one cold, foggy morning he took a bicycle ride. When he returned for breakfast, he went straight to his desk and began to write. Four days later, *Good-bye, Mr. Chips* was completed; within a few months it was a best-seller. At about the same time, Alexander Woollcott went "quietly mad" over *Lost Horizon*, and Hilton's popularity was assured. His latest book, *So Well Remembered*, is a current best-seller. The motion picture versions of his books have met with enormous success.

PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE HALSMAN EXCLUSIVELY FOR POCKET BOOKS, INC.

Born in Lancashire in 1900, he wanted to become a concert pianist, turned instead to journalism. He likes dogs, music, and mountain-climbing, and prefers novels that tell a story. His own do.

"I believe that people will always like stories," he writes. "Whatever things are false, these at least are true—the fervor of youth, the sadness of age, the thrill of danger, the splendor of achievement. That these things are backgrounded by the crazy litter of so much that nowadays passes for civilization does not dispossess them of their inherent virtue; it rather outlines them for our wonder. For the wonder certainly is that in a world like ours we still have them."

James Hilton's books have been published in America by Little Brown & Co. and Wm. Morrow. The first Pocket Book ever published was *Lost Horizon*—now well past the million-and-a-quarter copy mark in sales. Other Hilton titles which have been published in Pocket Book editions are *And Now Good-bye*, *Without Armor*, *Good-bye Mr. Chips* and *Random Harvest*.

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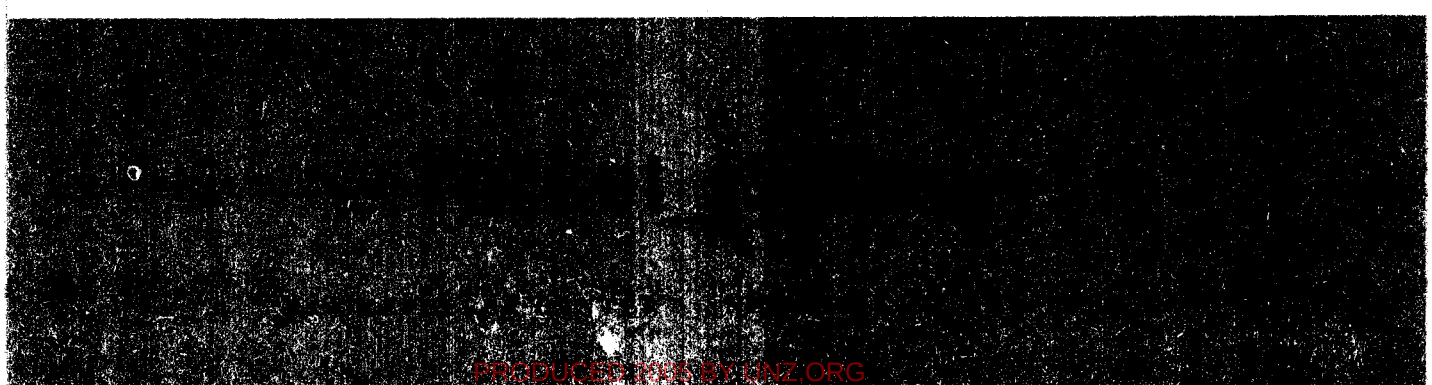

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